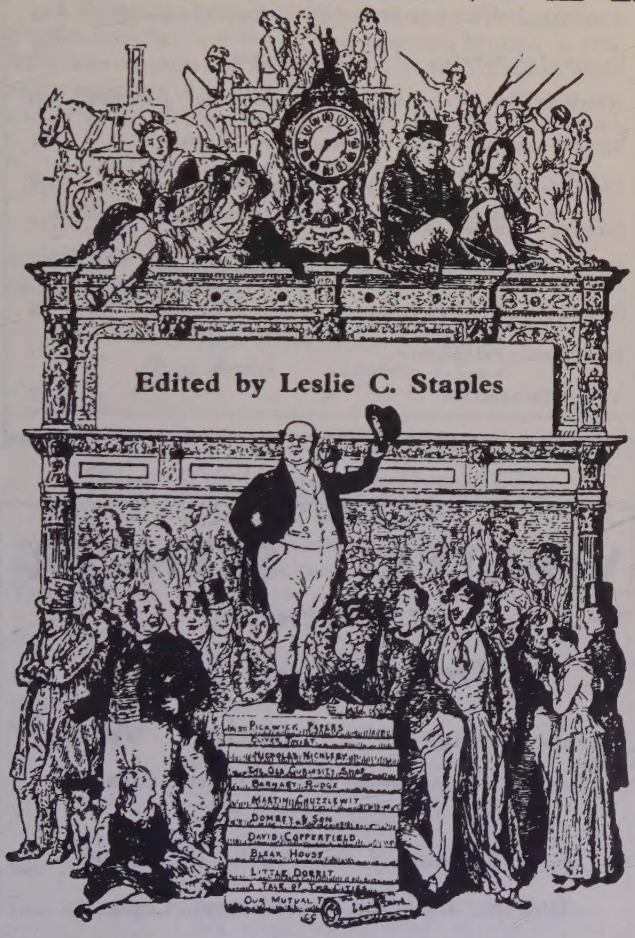
VOL. LV, Part II

SPRING NUMBER
Published May, 1959

No. 328

THE DICKENSIAN



PUBLISHED BY THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

THE DICKENS HOUSE, 48 DOUGHTY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

Published January, May and September.

Price 4*s*. Annual Subscriptions 12*s*. 6*d*. post free.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
When Found—	67
Edwin Drood: The Twilight of a God. Mollie Greenhalgh ...	68
Rapping the Rappers. II. N. C. Peyrouton	75
A Five-Year-Old Critic of *Nicholas Nickleby*. W. J. Carlton	89
Dickens and the Ragged Schools. P. A. W. Collins ...	94
The Theatrical Ternans. V. Malcolm Morley	109
Dickens on the Stage	117
Dickens Birthday Dinner at the House of Commons ...	118
Hail Columbia! John Greaves	123
The Dickens Fellowship	127
Recent Dickensiana	127

WALTER T. SPENCER

(M. E. SPENCER)

27 New Oxford Street,

ESTABLISHED 1884 **London, W.C.1**

Cable and Telegraphic Address: "PHIZ, WESTCENT, LONDON."

Telephone: HOLBORN 3936

First Editions of the Works of Charles Dickens, including Presentation Copies; also Manuscripts, Autograph Letters for Sale

THE REVIEW OF ENGLISH STUDIES

A Quarterly Journal of historical and critical studies in English literature and the English language, founded in 1925. Each issue contains articles, short notes, reviews of recent books, and a summary of periodical literature. The Editor is supported by an advisory panel of twenty distinguished scholars.

A New Series commenced with the volume for 1950.

Published in January, April, July and October.

Subscription (for four consecutive numbers) 45*s.*, *post free.* Single numbers 14*s. net.*

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Amen House - London, E.C.4.

The Dickens Fellowship

LONDON MEETINGS

Mon. Jan. 12th.	"The Toy Theatre." Mr. George Speaight.
Sat. Feb. 7th.	BIRTHDAY DINNER. All tickets sold.
Tues. Feb. 10th.	"The Heroes and Heroines of Dickens." Mr. Angus Wilson.
Sat. Feb. 21st.	Visit to St. Paul's. Mr. John Greaves. Meet on steps to the West Door.
Wed. Mar. 4th.	Visit to Royal Mews. All tickets alloted.
Wed. Mar. 11th.	"Illustration." Mr. Edward Ardizzone.
Thur. April 16th.	Annual General Meeting. John Greaves Recital and "Bring and Buy" Sale. **Election of Committee:** The term of office is five years. Three members retire each year and are not eligible for re-election for twelve months. Nominations by members to fill the three vacancies should reach the Hon. Secretary not later than ten days prior to the Annual General Meeting, and should give the name of the proposer, the seconder, and be accompanied by the written consent of the member proposed for election.
Sat. April 18th.	Ramble: Bloomsbury and the Foundling Hospital. Messrs. Copeland and Macgregor.
Thur. April 30th.	Dramatic Performance, *Bleak House*. The Portland Hall, Little Tichfield Street. Tickets from the Dickens House. 7*s.* 6*d.*, 5*s.*, 3*s.* 6*d.*

All meetings, except where otherwise stated, at Swedenborg Hall, Bloomsbury Way, at 7 p.m.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

Founded 6th October, 1902.

LIST OF BRANCHES WITH HON. SECRETARIES.

HEADQUARTERS: THE DICKENS HOUSE, 48 DOUGHTY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.
HOL. 2127.

Hon. Secretary: JOHN GREAVES. Hon. Treasurer: W. A. MACGREGOR.
Hon. Editor of *The Dickensian*: LESLIE C. STAPLES.

UNITED KINGDOM

BATH (No. **81**), 21-3-21.—Miss G. M. ROLLING, 8 Southcot Place, Lyncombe Hill.

BIRMINGHAM (No. **19**), 20-11-03.—Miss K. VENABLES, 334 Boldmere Road, Sutton Coldfield, Warks.

BLACKBURN (No. **107**), 11-10-28.—LEO. MASON, 124 Preston New Road.

BLACKPOOL (No. **92**), 16-2-23.—Mr. W. WILSON, 21 Grange Road, Layton.

BRISTOL AND CLIFTON DICKENS SOCIETY (No. **124**), 1902.—C. W. DARLING, 208 Kellaway Avenue.

BROADSTAIRS (No. **130**), 22-10-37.—Miss G. WATERER, Dickens House, Broadstairs.

CHELTENHAM (No. **63**), 21-10-12.—Mrs. H. HAILING, Bradwell Lodge, Sandford Mill Road.

EASTBOURNE (No. **75**), 9-12-19.—A. MORTON WEBB, Dickens Hall, Upperton Road.

HULL (No. **34**), 19-10-05.—Mrs. C. SLEIGHT, 14 Newington Avenue, Boothferry Road.

LIVERPOOL (No. **5**), 28-1-03.—Miss J. EDWARDS, 5 Sunny Bank, Bebington Cheshire.

LYTHAM ST. ANNES (No. **135**), 19-9-47.—Miss D. BURTON, Antley, Worsley Road, Andsell.

MANCHESTER (No. **4**), 27-1-03.—Mrs. G. MACKRELL, 19 Sandilands Rd., Manchester, 23.

NOTTINGHAM (No. **9**), 6-3-03.—Mrs. MARY GILES, The Rectory, Wollaton.

PLYMOUTH (No. **46**), 16-11-07.—Miss VERA COCKS, 31 Mt. Gold Road, Lipson.

PORTSMOUTH (No. **137**), 11-2-03.—Miss PORTER, 104 Lawrence Road, Southsea.

PRESTON (No. **123**), 14-6-33.—Mrs. A. SLEDDON, Ribble Bank, Salmesbury.

REDDITCH (No. **56**), 1-9-11.—Miss K. WATSON, 74 South Street.

ROCHESTER (No. **13**), 26-5-03.—Mr. F. H. SEARS, 242 City Way.

SHEFFIELD (No. **23**), 22-4-04.—Mrs. J. MOXON, 50 Grove Avenue, Sheffield, 6.

SHREWSBURY (No. **14**), 12-10-03.—Mrs. H. M. CROCKITT, 24 Ashley Street.

SOUTHEND AND DISTRICT (No. **54**), 11-7-10.—Mrs. MADGE WITHERS, 20 Lime Ave., Leigh-on-Sea.

TEWKESBURY (No. **74**), 27-10-19.—L. G. MARSTON, Rosemead, 34 Barton Road.

WOLVERHAMPTON (No. **136**), 8-11-47.—Mrs. G. CONWAY, 123 Trysall Road.

HOLLAND

HAARLEM (No. **142**), 8-12-56.—Mr. NICO ANDRIESSEN, Marcelisvaartpad II, Overveen.

ZWOLLE (No. **144**), 29-9-58.—Mr. HERMAN HANNINK, Nieuwstraat 12, Raalte.

AUSTRALIA

ADELAIDE (No. **127**), 9-3-36.—Mr. G. ROWE, A.N.Z. Bank, 132 Waymouth Street.

BRISBANE (No. **83**), 24-6-21.—Mrs. R. P. BURROWS, 9th Floor, AMP Bldg., Edward Street.

MELBOURNE (No. **24**), 1/8/04.—Miss MCKEEKIN, 2 Clendon Road, Armadale, Victoria, S.E.3.

SYDNEY (N.S.W.) (No. **64**), 19-12-12.—Mrs. L. BANNISTER, 1 The Strand, Rockdale.

NEW ZEALAND

AUCKLAND (No. **99**), 1-8-26.—Miss B. WRIGHT, 11 Galatea Terrace, Herne Bay.

CHRISTCHURCH (No. **117**), 3-10-31.—Miss P. BRUNT, 180 Palmers Road, New Brighton.

DUNEDIN (No. **139**), 1-9-52.—Miss MAY THOMSON, 44 Leven Street.

WELLINGTON (No. **121**), 5-7-32.—Mrs. D. M. MACLEOD, 59 Kemp Street, Kilbirnie.

CANADA

EDMONTON (Alberta) (No. **100**), 1-3-27.—Miss R. CALLENDER, 12711-118 Avenue.

MONTREAL (Que.) (No. **52**), 5-3-09.—Miss G. WHITE, 3439 Walkley Avenue.

TORONTO (Ont.) (No. **32**), 9-5-05.—Mrs. E. L. SCHATZ, 66 Lankin Blvd.

VANCOUVER (B.C.) (No. **84**), 15/9/21.—Miss MARY FRAMPTON, 40 North Hythe Avenue, N. Burnaby, B.C.

VICTORIA (B.C.) (No. **113**), 3-1-31.—Mrs. D. H. WHITE, 86 Kingham Place.

WINNIPEG (Manitoba) (No. **25**), 3-10-04.—Mrs. P. S. H. MURPHY, 59 Monck Avenue, Norwood.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

BLOOMINGTON (Indiana) (No. **140**), 14-10-07.—Mrs. R. W. HYNMAN, 318 S. Henderson Street.

BOSTON (Mass.) (No. **73**), 7-2-19.—Mrs. MARTHA C. RIPLEY, 141 Englewood Avenue, Brookline.

CALIFORNIA PICKWICK CLUB (No. **131**), 2-4-38.—Mrs. EUNICE GRIFFITHS ,5418 7th Ave. Los Angeles.

CHESTER (Pa.) (No. **22**), 4-1-04.—Mrs. JOHN O'BRIEN, 740 Irvington Road.

CHICAGO (Ill.) (No. **33**), 24-5-05.—Mrs. DAMARIS W. BRADFORD, 6060 N. Paulina Street.

EVERETT (Wash.) (No. **82**), 7-4-21.—Mrs. S. MILLESON, 4022 High Street.

HONOLULU (Hawaii) (No. **115**), 3-1-31.—Mrs. HELEN TOPHAM, University of Hawaii.

KOKOMO (Ind.) (No. **143**), 5-10-57.—Mrs. E. E. BROOKING, 317 N. Armstrong Street.

LOS ANGELES (Cal.) (No. **89**), 9-3-22.—Mrs. J. H. STEIN, 8953 S. Ruthellen Avenue.

MADISON (Wis.) (No. **103**), 16-11-27.—Mrs. P. HAMMER, Route 1, Box 7.

MARINETTE (Wis.) (No. **108**), 6-4-29.—Mrs. JACK WEST, 2125 Riverside Avenue.

MARYVILLE (Missouri (No. **133**), 3-7-43.—Mrs. A. F. HARVEY, 722 North Fillmore St., Maryville, Mo., U.S.A.

NEW YORK CITY (N.Y.) (No. **29**), 1-4-05.—Mrs. P. VALENTINE, 160 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn.

OAKLAND St., ALBERTS COLLEGE (No. **141**), 2-10-54.—Rev. JOSEPH FULTON, P.P. St. Alberts College, 6172 Chabot Road, Oakland 18, Calif.

PALOS VERDES (Cal.) (No. **129**), 1-10-36.—Mrs. BROOKS SNELGROVE, 440 via Corta, P.O. Box 863.

PHILADELPHIA (Pa.) (No. **41**), 7-2-07.—Miss E. HUNTER, 3507 Highland Avenue, Camden, N.J.

PITTSBURGH (Pa.) (No. **97**), 15-6-25.—Miss W. M. ROBINSON, 415 Bigelow Apts.

SEATTLE (Wash.) (No. **126**), 7-2-21.—Mrs. B. S NEWMAN, 6512, 39th S.W.

SIERRA MADRE (Cal.) (No. 60), 7-2-12.—Mrs. J. EARL GOSSARD, 625 Maripan Avenue.

WORCESTER (Mass.) (No. **119**), 26-1-32.—Mrs T. EARLE, Jnr., 66 Beaconsfield Road

The dates following the Number of each Branch indicates the date on which it was founded.

Full particulars of the Fellowship and Forms of Membership can be obtained from any of the Secretaries.

HULL AND LONDON: PRINTED BY A. BROWN AND SONS, LIMITED

THE DICKENSIAN

SPRING NUMBER

VOL. LV. MAY 1959 No. 328

WHEN FOUND—

Prince Philip Opening an Indian Scientific Conference in Delhi, the Duke of Edinburgh made humorous reference to *Mudfog Papers*, Dickens's satirical picture of the British Association.

* * * * *

The Prime Minister When in Moscow recently Mr. Macmillan recalled that he was last there, as a private tourist, about thirty years ago. "I fully expect," he added, "that conditions in the Soviet Union to-day are almost as different from what they were then as England is from the picture painted by Dickens."

* * * * *

s.s. Britannia Our frontispiece is reproduced by the kindness of Admiral Sir Gerald Dickens, who owns the original, a water-colour by Clarkson Stanfield, showing the *Britannia* leaving Liverpool for America in January, 1842, with Dickens aboard. The picture was later engraved for publication in the 1850 edition of *American Notes*. The water-colour was purchased at the Gad's Hill sale, 1870, by Lord Darnley, for £110. Sir Gerald bought it at Portsmouth in 1931 for £20. Admiral Dickens points out that Stanfield was in error in depicting the flag of the United States at the mizzen peak, the place for the national ensign, the *Britannia*, of course, being a British ship. The American flag was probably flown at the fore-mast. It is customary for ships to display there the flag of the country for which they are bound.

* * * * *

The City Pickwick Club The City Pickwick Club held its Jubilee Dinner at the George and Vulture on 16th March last.

* * * * *

The Eytinge Portrait The portrait of Dickens by Eytinge which we published in the last number for the first time, and which was the basis for the well-known engraving, clearly owes something, it is pointed out by Mr. Leo Mason, to the Mason photograph of the novelist which appears in Forster's *Life of Dickens*, The Memorial Edition, edited by B. W. Matz, vol. ii, page 350.

* * * * *

Collin Brooks The Fellowship has lost a good friend and a distinguished Vice-President by the death in April of Collin Brooks, editor of *Truth*, 1940-1953.

LESLIE C. STAPLES

EDWIN DROOD: THE TWILIGHT OF A GOD

From a Lecture by Mollie Greenhalgh given to the Dickens Fellowship, London, November 13th, 1958.

I WANT to talk to you not so much about *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* as about *The Mystique of Edwin Drood*: so that anybody expecting a new and original solution to the world's most famous detective story will be disappointed.

It is a truism that "familiarity breeds contempt" and few familiarities breed so *much* contempt as the familiarity of an adaptor/dramatist with his material. If any of you has ever adapted a play from a novel or short story, you will know, as I do, the way in which such a process drains all the life and entertainment value out of that novel—at least for years, until the memory of the dissection has faded. But for me *Edwin Drood* has survived that acid test. Some years ago I adapted it for sound radio—not once, but twice, as the first version proved unsatisfactory. And yet I have read it since, again and again, always with delight, always feeling it to be a thing which age could not wither nor custom stale. And this is nothing to do with personal predilection or affection—I feel those for *Pickwick* and *Nickleby* very strongly, and yet I cannot read *them* so often without a slight feeling of staleness and a tendency to skip, here and there. But *Drood* is different. Perhaps that is the secret of the whole thing: *Drood* is Different.

What separates it so much from the other works of Dickens? It is a fragment; 23 chapters; it is an essay in detective fiction as is none other of his works, even *Our Mutual Friend*; and it is his *last* work. "He ended," says Chesterton, "by inventing the new detective story. A new Dickens was really being born when Dickens died." It was the 8th of June, 1870, when Dickens laid aside his pen for the last time after writing the inconclusive and forever maddening sentence in which Mr. Datchery adds another chalk mark to the score against John Jasper, "and then falls to with an appetite." Alas, though the mysterious Datchery's appetite might well have been satisfied with a substantial breakfast possibly including his famous pint of sherry, the appetite of Dickens's readers was for ever to be denied. That summer evening he was struck down by the seizure from which he never recovered. The grave which he had requested was to have been near his beloved home, Gad's Hill, in Rochester Cathedral itself—Rochester, the Cloisterham of *Drood*—but instead it was a grave in Westminster Abbey which was to hide his body, his secret, and the remainder of the most tantalising book he ever wrote.

It is significant that *Drood* belongs both to Dickens's age and to his youth. His father, a navy pay clerk, had been stationed at Chatham from 1817 to 1823—for the little Charles, they were the formative and important years between five and eleven, when the boy's growing mind—and what a bright mind his must have been!—absorbed impressions and developed affections conscious and unconscious. He knew Rochester as the native Deputy knew Cloisterham. Many of the things that first struck him as remarkable or beautiful must have been connected with Chatham and

Rochester, which for practical purposes are all one place. As Dame Una Pope-Hennessey says in her Biography: "He knew every nook and cranny in Rochester. It was the first place he wrote about in the opening chapters of *Pickwick*: it was the last place he wrote about in *Edwin Drood*."

And yet, what a difference in the two descriptions! Let me remind you of them. As Mr. Pickwick and his friends approach Rochester, Mr. Jingle gives them a running commentary on the city.

"Ah! fine place," says Jingle. "glorious pile—frowning walls—tottering arches—dark nooks—crumbling staircases—Old cathedral too—earthy smell—pilgrims' feet worn away the old steps—little Saxon doors—confessionals like money-takers' boxes at theatres—queer customers those monks—Popes, and Lord Treasurers, and all sorts of old fellows, with great red faces, and broken noses, turning up every day—buff jerkins too—matchlocks—Sarcophagus—fine place—old legends too—strange stories: capital."

(It is worth remembering at this point that to a certain degree the voice of Jingle is the voice of the young Dickens, the self-styled "Inimitable"—both lively theatrical young men whose habit it was to entertain their friends with bizarre and highly-colourful conversation.) Now listen to the voice of the narrator of *Edwin Drood*, the later Dickens:

"An ancient city, Cloisterham, and no meet dwelling-place for anyone with hankerings after the noisy world . . . a drowsy city, whose inhabitants seem to suppose, with an inconsistency more strange than rare, that all its changes lie behind it, and that there are no more to come . . . A city of another and a bygone time is Cloisterham, with its hoarse Cathedral bell, its hoarse rooks hovering about the Cathedral tower, its hoarser and less distinct rooks in the stalls far beneath. All things in it are of the past . . . the Cloisterham children grow small salads in the dust of abbots and abbesses, and make dirt-pies of nuns and friars."

You see . . . the same facts, but rendered in how different a way. It is like a Brahms Symphony after a jazz session. In another place the Dickens of *Drood* says about Cloisterham: "Its antiquities and ruins are surpassingly beautiful."

And this from the man whose lifelong attitude to antiquity had been the patronising Victorian one which regarded old things as necessarily rather dirty at their worst and amusingly quaint at their best. Witness the fall of the house of Clennam in *Little Dorrit*—the old house which collapses with its own rottenness, and which Arthur Clennam has entered earlier, through a door canopied with "festooned jack-towels and children's heads with water on the brain." Witness also the chilly horrors of the stately home of the Dedlocks, and the ponderous humours of those mediaeval legends which occur throughout the earlier books, and in which the picture presented to us of mediaeval architecture is one of endless pseudo-Tudor half-timbering, like the worst 1920 design for a stockbrokers' paradise with Ye Olde Oake Cafe in Ye Ancient Shoppynge Centre. In fact, Dickens had not much feeling for history, and his anti-Catholic bias prejudiced him automatically against any pre-Reformation church.

Not that he had ever been a particularly devout man; he was more of our time than his own in regarding Church in the manner so frequently regretted by the clergy—as a place to be christened, married and buried in, without any particular necessity for entering it between those ceremonies. Little Paul Dombey is christened in what we may presume to be Marylebone Church:

" . . . a chill, earthy place . . . its dreary perspective of empty pews stretching away under the galleries, and empty benches mounting to the roof and lost in the shadow of the great grim organ . . . the grisly free seats in the aisles . . . the strange, uncomfortable smell, and the cadaverous light."

" It was a cold and dismal scene," Dickens says at the end of this paragraph, in a slightly unnecessary burst of confidence—we know that any church described by him in his youth always *does* present a cold and dismal scene ! There is poor little Paul's sister Florence, marrying Walter Gay in " a church which has a strange smell like a cellar, with a disappointed bell and a dusty vestry where the wormy registers diffuse a smell like faded snuff."

Which makes it all the more remarkable that in *Drood* the main character is a church—Cloisterham Cathedral. The Cathedral dominates the story from the moment when " its massive grey square tower " rises before the jaded traveller's eyes, to the closing chapter in which Princess Puffer points it out to Datchery—" massive " (the same looming word, you note) " against the dark blue sky and the early stars." The Cathedral supplies John Jasper with his musical living—Mr. Crisparkle with his sacred calling—Durdles with his ghastly hobby of detecting " old 'uns " long since lost to sight, nor to memory ever dear—Mr. Sapsea with enormous pride (you may remember that he " pointed it out to Mr. Datchery as if he had himself invented and built it; there were a few details of which he did not approve, but these he glossed over, as if the workmen had made mistakes in his absence."

And, if we are to take the trail of clues at their face-value, the Cathedral was to supply Edwin Drood with a hidden grave in the Sapsea vault itself, and its tower was to be the scene of Neville Landless's death and the capture of Jasper by the police. Had the book been completed, the Cathedral would doubtless have seen the joint weddings of Rosa and Helena.

Never does the Cathedral degenerate into a place of facetious ghost stories or goblin apparitions like the one which manifested itself to Gabriel Grub. Never does it become a glossily sentimental setting for death, as did that peculiarly nasty ruin in which Little Nell was laid out, or that which pops up at the end of *Oliver Twist* to enshrine a wall-tablet with the single word " Agnes."

It maintains its dignity throughout, and grows from its first museum-like description into a place of great beauty. Datchery expresses to Jasper a wish to " live on his means in this lovely place, in peace and quiet." The Cathedral is no longer dark, but a building full of light. Here is the last word-picture of it—a significant one.

" A brilliant morning shines on the old city. Its antiquities and ruins are surpassingly beautiful, with a lusty ivy gleaming in

the sun, and the rich trees waving in the balmy air. Changes of glorious light from moving boughs, songs of birds, scents from gardens, woods and fields . . . penetrate into the Cathedral, subdue its earthy odour, and preach the Resurrection and the Life. The cold stone tombs of centuries ago grow warm; and flecks of brightness dart into the sternest marble corners of the building, fluttering there like wings."

Is it straining conjecture too much to imagine that, with his own death so near, the sensitive soul of Dickens felt an atavistic desire to draw near to the comfort and strength and peace that surrounds a place long worshipped in? It seems like that, when he speaks of Minor Canon Corner as being full of that "blessed air of tranquillity and serenely romantic state of the mind . . . engendered by a sorrowful story that is all told, or a pathetic play that is played out."

So, to Dickens, *Edwin Drood* was his end and his beginning. And it can also, in many ways be called his maturity. His richly comic vein had been fully exploited; there is hardly an overdrawn character in *Drood*. His campaigning and reforming days were over. In Mr. Honeythunder there is an echo of the political/satirical Dickens; Mr. Sapsea has faint gleams of *Chadband's* brow upon him—but in the main the people of *Drood* are real people. Jasper is not all villain—he has a love for Edwin that nearly balances the hatred which overcomes him. Rosa Bud, for all her whimsicality and swoons, is only the second real woman Dickens ever drew (the first being Bella Wilfer). Here is no simpering half-wit maiden from a faded sentimental print, a wax doll without blood or wit, like the anaemic "romantic" princess of Disney cartoons, but a real schoolgirl who is more interested in the Tuckshop than in Edwin, who eats Turkish Delight and licks her fingers, and is not above giving way to bursts of temper—as when she goads Edwin into describing his imaginary fiancée, and then invents an unpleasant portrait of the lady with "a long pale nose with a knob in the middle. *I* know the sort of nose," says Rosa, with a satisfied nod.

"You don't know the sort of nose, Rosa," replies Edwin with some warmth. "because it's nothing of the kind."

"Not a pale nose, Eddy?"

"No."

"A red nose? Oh. I don't like red noses. However, to be sure, she can always powder it."

"She would scorn to powder it," says Edwin, becoming heated.

"Would she? What a stupid thing she must be. Is she stupid in everything? . . . And she would, she would, she would, she WOULD powder it!" cries Rosa.

Surely it is Ellen Ternan who makes this little scene; Dickens's last love, as the naughty Maria Beadnell was his first. He is an ageing man, he has been married many years; but "'e learned about women from 'er," and dared to write about them for the first time, almost as they were. Not quite, but almost.

There is another reflection of the author's life in *Drood*; London hardly appears in it. Dickens had retired to Gad's Hill; the London which had fascinated and occupied him, but which

perhaps he had never liked as much as popular legend supposes him to have done, was behind him. In *Drood* it appears only in brief flashes, except for the lovely portrait of Staple Inn, almost rural in its seclusion. Is this an unconscious memory of Furnival's Inn, his first married home, where the bright figure of the lost Mary Hogarth shone among the dusty trappings of the law as Rosa shone in Grewgious's office ? And in the place of grotesquerie, and wax angels, and fiery campaigns, and all the trappings of Dickensiana, there appears a new element:—poetry. In no previous book did he write in the lovely prose cadences of *Drood*. It is not for nothing that music plays so large a part in it—the singing of Jasper and the choir, Crisparkle softly touching his piano, Rosa singing " the sorrowful strain of parting . . ." One writer on *Drood*, Richard Proctor, remarks that " there is much in the music of the story to suggest that trouble for Edwin is approaching " . . . *the music of the story*—and Chesterton speaks of the novel's " retrospective poetry." Certain passages and phrases are unsurpassed in Dickens's writing, and not to be compared with anything else he wrote. Think of that first picture of the choir leaving the Cathedral, after evensong, Tope and the Dean walking in the Close.

> " Not only is the day waning, but the year. The low sun is fiery and yet cold behind the monastery ruin, and the Virginia creeper on the Cathedral wall has showered half its deep-red leaves down on the pavement. There has been rain this afternoon, and a wintry shudder goes among the little pools on the cracked, uneven flag-stones, and through the giant elm trees as they shed a gust of tears. Their fallen leaves lie strewn thickly about. Some of these leaves, in a timid rush, seek sanctuary within the low arched Cathedral door; but two men coming out resist them, and cast them forth again with their feet; this done, one of the two locks the door with a goodly key, and the other flits away with a folio music-book."

Prose like that would have done credit to Keats, who loved cathedral cities and wrote in his letters of a Winchester that might have been Cloisterham itself. There is, in fact, a rather startling parallel in his poem " The Eve of St. Mark," with Dickens's prose in *Drood*. Listen to this—

> " Bertha was a maiden fair
> Dwelling in the old Minster-Square;
> From her fire-side she could see
> Sidelong, its rich antiquity
> Far as the Bishop's garden-wall . . .
> All was gloom, and silent all,
> Save now and then the still footfall
> Of one returning homewards late,
> Past the echoing minster-gate.
> The clamorous daws, that all the day
> Above tree-tops and towers play,
> Pair by pair had gone to rest,
> Each in ancient belfry-nest,
> Where asleep they fall betimes,
> To music and the drowsy chimes."

What echoes of *Drood* are in that—written 51 years before, when Dickens was seven years old! I don't suppose he had ever read it, and he was certainly not attempting an imitation of Keats. He had been many things in his time, but never a poet—and now, in his last months, he came to it. He had never before devoted himself much to the description of *romantic* characters, as against merely sentimental ones—but how unforgettably vivid and economical is his description of the Landless twins:

> " . . . something untamed about them both; a certain air upon them of hunter and huntress; yet withal, a certain air of being the objects of the chase, rather than the followers."

My own view is that this new melody in his style was the direct, if unexpected result, of his physical exhaustion and poor health. His lecture tours and personal troubles had taken their toll of his strength. He was no longer the ebullient electric spark he had been, but an ageing and a dying man. In a lesser man this might have produced merely poorer, weaker, work; but from the wonderful mechanism that was Dickens it produced something that was more relaxed and unselfconscious than anything he had written before. His marvellous craftsmanship was allowed to shine out undimmed by tricks of verbiage, sentimentality, or grandiloquence, and he wrote at last with almost perfect simplicity, which is the heart of good writing.

There is another noteworthy detail about *Drood*. Together with some of his other trade marks, Dickens abandons in it the traditional Dickens Christmas. True, Christmas occurs, but it is a mild, almost absent-minded affair.

> " Red berries shine here and there in the lattices of Minor Canon Corner; Mr. and Mrs. Tope are daintily sticking sprigs of holly into the carvings and sconces of the Cathedral stalls, as if they were sticking them into the coat-buttonholes of the Dean and Chapter . . . An unusual air of gallantry and dissipation is abroad; evinced in an immense bunch of mistletoe hanging in the greengrocer's shop doorway, and a poor little Twelfth Cake, culminating in the figure of a Harlequin—such a very poor little Twelfth Cake, that one would rather call it a 24th Cake or a 48th Cake—to be raffled for at the pastry-cook's."

Where are the jolly revels of Dingley Dell and Mr. Fezziwig's Party? Where is the Spirit of Christmas Present? Not to be found this year. And worse, the eve of Christmas is actually the date of Edwin Drood's disappearance—presumably of his murder. For the first time, Christmas and Crime are allied in the mind of Dickens . . .

What caused this near-heresy, in one who practically founded Christmas as we know it to-day (with some slight assistance from the Prince Consort)? There is a theory, not mine but that of Richard Baker, that because Dickens had now dethroned the family ideal in his own life, by his separation from his wife and association with Ellen Ternan, he felt subconsciously the need to depose Christmas, that essentially family festival. He had, says Baker, become a rebel against society, and here is one expression of it—" by some strange revulsion of feeling he cast aside his

Carol philosophy to choose December 25th as the day for Edwin Drood's murder."

Whether there is any connection between this Freudian theory and Dickens's choice of subject in *Drood*, is a very moot point indeed. Baker remarks that John Jasper's situation was that of the criminal in " The Ballad of Reading Gaol ":

> " The man had killed the thing he loved
> And so he had to die."

Edwin was Jasper's nephew—and was to be murdered. Dickens had not actually murdered any of *his* family, nor had he violated any conventions in his conduct towards his wife and children. I think it a good deal more likely that the plot was suggested by an actual Rochester murder of which Dickens knew, an uncle-and-nephew case which appeared in *All the Year Round* as the tale of a man named Acland whose body was discovered in an ice-house and identified by means of a watch. Dickens had been working closely with Wilkie Collins—Collins was detection-minded—what Collins could do, Dickens could do better—as indeed he did.

Chesterton did not overstate the case in saying that Dickens invented the new detective story. How new *Drood* is—not only for the writer, but for the times ! How remarkable is the opening, with its montage technique—the perfect beginning for a film. First the image of the ancient English Cathedral Tower—then, imposed on it, the grim spike for impaling Turkish criminals—then a procession of Eastern splendours—dancing girls, flashing scimitars, clashing cymbals, white elephants caparisoned in gorgeous colours—then the spike dissolving into another image, as the drug-addict returns to consciousness. " Stay ! is the spike so low a thing as the rusty spike on the top of a post of an old bedstead, that has tumbled all awry ? "

What a film scenarist he would have made ! The scenes that follow the opening are so brilliantly described that they remain visually in the mind when the dialogue and even the action have faded from it. They are more vivid to me than any other scenes in his works—as scenes in their own right, and not merely as settings for characters.

As to the working out of the story, it is most unfortunately quite impossible to tell how perfect *that* would have been. Too little was completed—only just over 200 pages, which for a Dickens novel of average length means only about a third of the entire book. But from the indications, I am inclined to think that it would have been clearer, more incisive, and less cluttered with irrelevancies and multitudinous characters than his other books. All the characters are connected, there is little of his characteristic flitting from scene to scene, leaving one group in suspension while the affairs of another are described. It bears all the signs of a tidy, almost modern detective story, written with economy and an eye to fair play—more than can be said for most of the other gigantic canvasses with their complex coincidental relationships !

I have called these remarks of mine " The Twilight of a God "; but on second thoughts I would say that the pages of *Drood* are

illuminated not so much by twilight, as by an indescribably lovely light as from a great sunset. It was the greatest literary sunset since Shakespeare's, when one considers it; and though Shakespeare's sun went down on the magnificent pantomime of "The Tempest," with every theatrical effect in his repertoire, and Dickens's sank among the quiet streets and drifting leaves of Cloisterham, both men in their last work made the same discovery of Magic. Dickens wrote to Collins about *Drood* that he "wished to show, *by a backward light*, what everything had been working to"; and what a backward light it turned out to be! The loveliest and the last, the final miracle of the Inimitable and Immortal; the Unfinished Symphony of Literature.

RAPPING THE RAPPERS

MORE GRIST FOR THE BIOGRAPHERS' MILL

By N. C. Peyrouton

Continued from p. 30

The Second Phase

Ironically, the second phase was precipitated by an old *Household Word*'s contributor, William Howitt.[1] His approach was calculated to embarrass his former editor. Dickens's reply attests to the measure of his success with the tactic:

Office of *All the Year Round*.
Tuesday, Sixth September, 1859.

. . . I don't adopt my contributor's theory. He is a well-known man, with curious experiences, and all the stories that he relates in his own person I have heard him tell for years. They are not in the least altered or touched to suit his present purpose. He has related them strictly on honour. He himself inhabitated a very famous Kentish Haunted House, and is shut up to this day—or was the other day.

My own mind is perfectly unprejudiced and impressible on the subject. I do not in the least pretend that such things are not. But I positively object, on most matters, to be thought for, or—if I may use the odd expression—asserted down. And I have not yet met with any Ghost Story that was proved to me, or that had not the noticeable peculiarity in it—that the alteration of some slight circumstance would bring it within range of common natural probabilities. I have always had a strong interest in the subject, and never knowingly lose an opportunity of pursuing it. But I think the testimony which I cannot cross-examine, sufficiently loose, to justify me in requiring to see and hear the modern witnesses with my own

[1] William Howitt (1792-1879), an ex-Quaker whose house in Hampstead had become headquarters for every kind of non-conformist: abolitionists, anti-vivisectionalists, teetotalers, etc. Author of a *History of the Supernatural*, etc. (1863).

senses and then be reasonably sure that they were not suffering under a disordered condition of the nerves or senses, which is known to be a common disease of many phases.

Don't suppose that I am so bold and arrogant as to settle what can and what cannot be, after death. The truth is not so at all. I think the theory of my contributor's story the one class of cases in which the image of the person dying, or in very great peril, is strongly suggested to an intimate friend. I do not otherwise regard it as applicable.

On the other hand, when I think of the amount of misery and injustice that constantly attains in this world which a word from the dead person in question could set right, I would not believe—could not believe—in your War Office Ghost,[1] without overwhelming evidence . . .[2]

—Was Dickens suggesting mental telepathy as an explanation of this variety of clairvoyance ?—The matter was brought up again, this time by Dickens's brother Alfred, to whom Charles wrote on November 2nd:

—the War-Office Ghost matter was not very intelligible, even to myself, when I saw it in the Papers. All that I know of it, is this, Howitt (who is a kind of arch-rapper among the rappers), wrote me a gossiping private note respecting some papers in these pages, called A Physician's Ghosts: wherein the Ghosts treated of, are accounted for, and supposed not to be real apparitions. To this accounting and supposing, Howitt (as said arch-rapper of rappers) objected and asked me " what I thought of the Ghost of the Officer killed in the Crimea, who had obliged the War Office, to alter an erroneous date entered in their books as the date of his death ? "—I replied that what I thought of it, was, that I should require very strong evidence, indeed, in proof of the story . . . I ought to mention that Howitt afterwards published his letter in a certain periodical curlpaper called *The Spiritual Telegraph*—and described my answer.[3]

Howitt refused to be satisfied that this could be Dickens's final pronouncement and seized the opportunity afforded him by the appearance in London, January 1860, of a spiritualist monthly to reinstitute the public war with Dickens. In an article entitled *Mr. Howitt and Mr. Dickens*, ostensibly by the Editor of *The Spiritual Magazine* but obviously inspired by Howitt, the author professes that he " cannot believe that Dickens disbelieves " because ghosts form the framework of so many of his stories. He complains that:

when appealed to by Mr. Howitt, as to whether they are dished up for his readers as well-written jokes or hoaxes, he solemnly assures him that they are neither the one nor the other, but on the contrary, are well attested and well believed accounts by

[1] A full account of the War Office Ghost appears on pp. 299-303, *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*, Robert Dale Owen (London, 1860). Stonehouse lists a copy with the notes: " Dickens seems to have attentively studied a portion of this curious work, apparently with a view to supernatural events in *Edwin Drood*."

[2] *Nonesuch Letters*, Vol. III, p. 121.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 132. Not the New York paper which was not published after 1857, but an English publication of the same name.

his able contributors . . . Will Mr. Dickens kindly tell us in plain words if he believes . . .[1]

Dickens is asked if he believes in the New Testament " which he commends to his readers " and is reminded that " there were ' haunted houses ' then; and men saw spirits and angels then as now who ' haunted them ' as the phrase is. Are they all untrue? Does Mr. Dickens dare to disbelieve them? "[2]

" Haunted houses " referred to a piece of business between Howitt and the Editor of *All The Year Round* aired the preceding month in the pages of the *Critic*. It seems that Dickens had requested from Howitt a list of haunted houses that might be visited and that Howitt, perhaps anticipating a conversion, had readily supplied it, only to be disappointed again.[3] Mr. Thomas Shorter, the obliging *Spiritual Magazine* editor, now reproduced Howitt's letter to the *Critic*, a part of which is worth quoting:

> . . . Surely a ghost is not bound to remain in any particular spot for ever; surely he may be allowed to leave his accustomed haunt, just as much as Mr. Dickens and his friends were at liberty to leave their own houses to go ghost-hunting . . . Mr. Dickens says in his note to me, that " the well-informed " accounted for the reports about Mr. Chapman's house " by rats, and a certain man, Frank by name, who was addicted to poaching for rabbits at untimely hours " . . .[4]

The editor suggested that if the sceptics would " appoint Charles Dickens to investigate for them, and will be bound by his statements, we will take some personal trouble with him for the sake of the whole."[5] As a parting shot in this curious duel, Dickens's fiction *The Haunted House* is characterised as being untrue! "As for Spiritualism," wrote Mr. Shorter, " I would recommend those who desire to know what it really is not to form their judgement by the idiotic animal which Mr. Dickens introduces into his Christmas Number [1859], and which sort of creature he professes the highest for.[6]

Although neither Dickens nor the sceptics were prepared to accept Mr. Shorter's offer, *The Spiritual Magazine*, did take some trouble with Dickens, hoping against hope that they could win him over and, through him, the remainder of the influential opposition. Scarcely had the smoke from the skirmish on behalf of Howitt been cleared from the air when *The Spiritual Magazine* determined on a new, fool-proof approach. If they could not win over Dickens Senior might they not win over Dickens Junior?

In the June issue the tale was told. It was alleged that at the beginning of May, Mr. Evans Junior, son of Bradbury & Evans (erstwhile partners with Dickens in *Household Words* and the proprietors of *Punch*) had been introduced to a Mr. [J. R. M.] Squire [an American Spiritualist], and had witnessed " striking spiritual

[1] *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 1, January 1860, p. 58.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 59.
[3] According to Nandor Feodor (*op. cit.*, p. 176), Charles Dickens desired to visit some well-known haunted houses and asked for information. Howitt told him of Willington Mill which he had visited and a house at Cheshunt . . . But the house was partly pulled down and Dickens could not find it. See also Frederick Kitton, *The Minor Writings of Charles Dickens*, p. 161, for details of the visit.
[4] A slightly longer extract is in *Nonesuch Letters*, Vol. III, p. 139.
[5] *The Spiritual Magazine*, *op. cit.*, p. 60
[6] *Ibid*, p. 62.

phenomena"; that he narrated his experience to his brother and the younger Dickens who "after the manner of their parents, began to scoff, and to suggest that their informant was not quite sound in his head, but when he asseverated the story they decided to discover the hoax." Their meeting with Mr. Squire took place on May 11th at a house in Russell Square. Mr. Shorter assured his readers that both Dickens and Evans scrutinised the table "in search of some of the occult mechanism which Mr. Leech depicts in his cartoon" [1] without success.[2] The account of the séance is most melodramatic:

> . . . the table, a very heavy one, was raised from the ground, and as good test, the two outer cases of Mr. Squire's watch were opened, and the cap taken out, and the case reclosed, without the possibility of human agency . . .

The cap, of course, had disappeared. Raps advised the medium that the company should resume their positions around the table and the gas was lowered:

> . . . A complete circle of hands was formed, when the cap was heard to fall on the table in the midst of them, and there it was found when the gas was again turned on. The two sceptical sons of sceptical parents were rather more than convinced and looked at each other in wonderment.[3]

Subsequently both were invited to touch a *spirit* hand which Squire had caused to appear. The narrator implied that both young men, close to hysteria, tried to keep up a bold front and extended their hands. The *spirit* hand played a few tricks, teased them and then approached. Mr. Shorter reported that this was too much for them, that both withdrew their hands with young Dickens exclaiming: he would rather not—he could not stand it![4]

The editor, confident that he had scored, complimented "the gentlemen [who] acted in a perfectly frank and candid manner throughout, Mr. Dickens taking notes, which, no doubt, his father had seen and will make use of." He wound up reminding his readers that he did not apologise for mentioning the names of Dickens and Punch because they were "the most prominent deriders of the facts of Spiritualism."[5]

We need only point out that if indeed the Editor of *The Spiritual Magazine* hoped to soften up Dickens by this technique he was a very poor student of psychology. The elder Dickens could only resent the use of his son in such a cheap and obvious trap. A double-barrelled denial followed. The contributor of *Modern Magic*, after tracing in his article the origins of Spiritualism, with emphasis on a study of the career of the medievalist Dr. John Dee, and after taking a cut at the modern day Mrs. Marshall, Mr. Home, and Mr. Squire, noted their false claims of converts:

> . . . the unbelieving son of the conductor of this journal figures (when he is well on his way to China) in two numbers of the Spiritual Magazine as a believer, for no worse indescretion than

[1] In the May 12 issue of *Punch* John Leech depicted a *spirit* hand "taking a sight" at the nose of Napoleon III, who was attending one of Mr. Home's séances. The artist illustrated table moving machinery he believed was employed and a stuffed glove, also mechanically operated.
[2] *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol I, No. 6, June 1860, p, 245.
[3] *Idem.*
[4] *Ibid*, p. 247.
[5] *Ibid*, pp. 247-248.

the dangerous one of having gone to see what some experiments were like.

To this Dickens added his own footnote:

> He is represented in the publication in question, with the utmost hardihood, as telling his father that he (his father) " has been mistaken throughout. Good faith all these things can be, and are, for I have seen and heard them, father." It is absolutely impossible that any statement could be more untrue than this. He told his father that what he had seen and heard was very absurd, and he gave his father a highly ludicrous detail of the proceedings ! Editor's note.[1]

Like all the articles in *Household Words* and *All The Year Round*, *Modern Magic* appeared anonymously. The Rappers, however, believed—or wished to persuade others that they believed—the article to have been by Dickens. And so they renewed their attack on him in the August number of *The Spiritual Magazine*. Referring him again to his son (ignoring, for the nonce, his denial) and to an article in their current number, the editor quipped:

> Since he does not hesitate to charge Mrs. Marshall[2] with imposture, just let him address himself to the question of how she got the curate's name and address, and the family passages from his history.

He challenged Dickens " to go critically and scientifically into the phenomena witnessed by your son."[3]

> The attack continued in all its fury in the September number: Mr. Dickens has thought fit to denounce the physical demonstrations of Spiritualism upon a single visit to a professional demonstrator or medium where he paid his half-crown; and where he went with the foregone conclusion that he was about to detect an imposture . . . but we are bold to deny that ever the two humble women, whom Mr. Dickens has so foully aspersed, are in any manner imposters . . . It is a fortunate circumstance that a well-known literary gentleman was accidently present at the very manifestations so misrepresented by Mr. Dickens; and our readers will be glad to see his version of what occurred on that occasion in "A Rap on the Knuckles."[4]

In this number the Editor finally acknowledged Dickens's denial, which he called " feeble ".[5]

But the Marshalls were minor figures, hardly worth the trouble of defending or attacking. The Grand Signore of the Spiritualists, Daniel Dunglas Home, had lately returned to England; around him the great battles were to be fought.

Home's reception by the respectable periodicals, unlike Mrs. Hayden's, was mixed. Thackeray's *Cornhill Magazine* seemed to

1 *All The Year Round*, No. 66, July 28th, 1860, p. 374.

2 Mrs. Marshall (1842-1884), the first English professional medium whose manifestations included raps, table-turning, knotting handkerchiefs under the table, and a rudimentary form of slate writing. In her early séances she was assisted by her niece, and, occasionally, by her son. Her husband was a drawing medium. From 1867 on she had voice contact with John King, a spirit control claiming to be the bucaneer, Sir Henry Morgan. (Nandor Feodor, *op. cit.*, pp. 190 and 215).

3 *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 8, August 1860, p. 384.

4 *Ibid*, No. 9, pp. 386-388.

5 *Ibid*, p. 389.

champion his cause.[1] For his " fairness " Thackeray was lauded by *The Spiritual Magazine* and *The Banner of Light*; he was held up as an example to Dickens of how to behave.[2] From his Gad's Hill study the author gave his considered opinion to Mrs Dickenson (August 19th, 1860):

> . . . Your friend Robert Bell, having become Gentleman-usher in the spiritual establishment of Mrs. Milner Gibson, has written

D. D. Home

By permission of the College of Psychic Science.

> a portentous account of Spirit rapping and Table leaping, in the *Cornhill Magazine*. My opinion of the whole party is, that it is a combination of addle-headed persons, Toadies, and Humbugs.[3]

To Mr. Shorter's suggestion that he should not judge Home by Dr. Dee, that rather he should give Home a " personal test before doing this "[4] and to *The Banner of Light*'s taunts that he had not attended séances at the homes of " highly respectable and firmly believing private people " who would not countenance deception[5]

[1] The articles were by Robert Bell, an old friend of the Editor. They should not be construed as reflecting Thackeray's private opinion which had not changed substantially since 1852, when he first saw Home in New York. The articles were published chiefly because they increased the circulation of the magazine.

[2] *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 9; *The Banner of Light* (Boston), Vol. VII, No. 26, September 22, 1860.

[3] *Nonesuch Letters*, Vol. III, p. 172.

[4] *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. I, No. 9, pp. 390-391.

[5] *The Banner of Light*, *op. cit.*

Dickens made no public reply but wrote a long letter to another unbeliever:

Gad's Hill Place
Higham By Rochester, Kent.
Sunday, 16th September, 1860.

My Dear Mrs. Linton

Pray do not suppose I sent you that very unspiritual magazine for any other purpose than to keep you au courant to the subject. It has not in the least disturbed my equanimity.

I hold personal inquiry on my part to be out of the question for two reasons. Firstly, because the condition under which such inquiries take place—as I know in the recent case of two friends of mine, with whom I discussed them—are preposterously wanting in the common securities against deceit or mistake. Secondly, because the people lie so very hard, both concerning what did take place and what impression it made at the time on the inquirer.

Mr. Hume, or Home (I rather think he has gone by both names), I take the liberty of regarding as an imposter. If he *appeared* on his own behalf in any controversy with me, I should take the further liberty of letting him know publicly why. But be assured that if he were demonstrated a humbug in every microscopic cell of his skin and globule of his blood, the disciples would still believe and worship.

Mrs. Gibson is an impulsive, compassionate, affectionate woman. But as to the strength of her head: would you be very much surprised by its making a mistake ? Did you never know it much mistaken in a person or two it devoutly believed in ?

Believe me,
ever faithfully
your true friend,
Charles Dickens[1]

For the remainder of the year both sides rested—the Rappers for a time were stuck for a way in which to provoke afresh either Dickens or *All The Year Round*. Finally, in the February number of *The Spiritual Magazine* they resurrected the Ghost of the Cock Lane Ghost which the author of *Fallacies of Faith* (*A.Y.R.*, No. 73, September 15th, 1860) had touched upon in his review of Robert Dale Owen's *Footfalls on the Boundary of Another World*. They complained that the name had become:

> a bye-word—a synonym—for detected imposture. Does a journalist wish to point a moral about the credulity of human nature—especially when unenlightened by science—he calls up the "Cock-lane Ghost." Does Mr. Dickens want a smart title to an article against "Spirit-rapping" he christens it "The Ghost of the Cock-lane Ghost," and chuckles over it as a happy idea . . . the *smart men* who manufacture our intellectual pastry sometimes yield to the temptation to *cook* unpopular facts so as to adapt them to the public taste.[2]

Dickens had been over this ground before: *All The Year Round* did not reply.

[1] G. S. Layard, *Mrs. Lynn Linton: : her life, letters, and opinions* (London, 1901), pp 166-167.
[2] *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. II, No. 2, February 1861, pp. 73 and 81.

Many were puzzled by Dicken's attitudes towards Spiritualism. They were inclined to equate it with his avowed abhorence of the Spiritualists. Elizabeth Browning concluded that Dickens was afraid of the " truth " because he had " deeply committed himself to negatives "; that he was " fond of Ghost stories so long as they were impossible." [1] His sensitive handling of the Heapy ghost story proves that she had misread his feeling.

The Heapy ghost appeared first in one of a series of four *Ghostly Stories* (*AYR*, No. 125, September 14th, 1861). It attracted little notice, but—the real life protagonist contacted the Editor, identified himself, and included his own account of the events. Dickens welcomed the true story which, after a short exchange of correspondence,[2] appeared under the title, *Mr. H's Own Narrative* (*AYR*, No. 128, October 5th, 1861, with an explanatory introduction by the Editor.

Mr. Shorter, in his December number, was pleased to make capital out of the event:

> Perhaps no one of our popular writers has been more prominent at times in his abuse of the whole subject, and in contributing to this unwholesome fear and concealment than Mr. Dickens, whose weekly journal is just now converted into a deputy Spiritual Magazine, by his successive ghost stories, and by the [A] *Strange Story* of Sir Bulwer Lytton.[3] . . . Mr. Dickens, however, in throwing ridicule and denial on the subject, and in speaking of mediums as imposters, has only shewed one side of his mind, for at other times he has in his more free and general writing, spoken of it as all men of genius occasionally feel towards the realities of the spiritual world. Besides this, he he has frequently introduced ghost stories, as they are called, and has evinced a strong tendency towards the supernatural . . . the supernatural phase of Mr. Dickens character must have been uppermost lately, and we had intended to have given a most interesting anecdote[4] as an instance of it, in connection with Mr. H's Narrative, and to which we alluded in our last number. It has, however, been considered that it is of a so far private nature, that we should hardly be justified in publishing it, and we must, therefore, leave it with Mr. Dickens to make it known himself. It is certainly not the least interesting portion of this wonderful story. We observe that already some of Mr. Dickens's contemporaries are in full cry after him for admitting such stories in his periodical. Ghost stories, they say, are capital reading, and everybody likes them, so long as they are not asked to believe them; but now when Mr. H's story is put forward as true, it is said to be a disgrace to Mr. Dickens to give it currency. This is a sample and foretaste of what he may expect when he walks out arm-in-arm with us, as we have no doubt, he is destined to do.[5]

But this honeymoon did not consummate a marriage. In his

[1] Jean Burton, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
[2] Dickens' letters were printed to preface *A Wonderful Ghost Story*, etc., Thomas Heapy (London, 1882), p. 7-17.
[3] *A Strange Story* ran in AYR from Nos. 120-150, 10th Aug., 1861, to 8th March, 1863.
[4] Possibly that reprinted in Heapy, *op. cit.*, from Forster's *Life of Dickens*, Vol. II, p. 483 (original edition)
[5] *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. II, No. 12, December 1861, pp. 543-544.

February Number, Editor Shorter published a letter (January 18th, 1862) from S. C. Hall[1] endorsing the mediumship of a Mr. Foster with the comment:

> In these days of denial and ridicule of the facts, it is important to add so honoured a name to our list of believers, and it must make the Saturday Reviewers, and Critics, and All The Year Rounds look on with astonishment, to find that gentlemen better known than themselves do not fear to investigate the phenomenon, and to proclaim their truth.[2]

This was anticipating—Mr. Foster was probably the unidentified medium[3] exposed in *Small Beer Chronicles* (*AYR*, No. 176 September 6th, 1862). The author testified that he:

> could succeed in nothing when he was attentively watched by five persons seated in his own room at his own table: of which five persons, the writer was one, the conductor of this journal another, and M. Robin of the Egyptian Hall a very dangerous third . . . (p. 608).

The seeming lack of activity on the Rapper front at this time is deceptive: the year 1863 was most important. Dickens, who had not penned an article of his own against the Spiritualists since 1858, determined now to make clear to all his position on Spiritualism and Spiritualists in general and on Mr. Howitt and Mr. Hōme in particular. His first article, *Rather a Strong Dose* (*AYR*, No. 204, March 21st, 1863, reviewed Howitt's *History of the Supernatural*, etc., rapping his old contributor's articles of faith very hard; his second article, *The Martyr Medium* (*AYR*, No. 206, April 4th, 1863) dealt a similar measure to Mr. Home's autobiography. These two articles should be read in their entirety to appreciate the details of an attitude that we have only sketched. After their appearance, Mr. Thomas Shorter and *The Spiritual Magazine* seemed to lose their appetite for the fight and to have given up trying to bring Dickens around to their view. Thereafter they broke their silence only twice: once in 1867 to note that Dickens had " discovered his error but has not the moral courage to avow it," presenting in evidence *The Signalman*, which they alleged appeared " to be written by confimed Spiritualists ";[4] and once, in 1870, to note that the circumstances surrounding the publication of *Mr. H's Narrative* demonstrated "' Dickens was an unconscious medium " and that " he really did nothing to discredit " Modern Spiritualism."[5]

This was an important year, too, because Dickens's old friend, Dr. Elliotson, now seventy-two years of age, met D. D. Home in Dieppe[6] and defected to the enemy. The *Morning Post* (August 3rd, 1868) paints a pathetic picture of the convert: " he said he had been living all his life in darkness and had thought there was nothing in existence but the material."[7] He was reconciled with

1 An acquaintance of Dickens, who has been suggested as the original of Seth Pecksniff, and a zealous supporter of the clairvoyants.
2 *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. III. No. 2, February 1862, pp. 90-91.
3 Or possibly Home. The author describes the medium as having " been trumpeted about London as the most wonderful of all the wonderful mediums ever wondered at." Perhaps Dickens had tested Home.
4 *The Spiritual Magazine*, Vol. VI, No. 3 (March, 1867), pp. 97-98.
5 *Ibid.*, Vol. IX, No. 7 (July, 1870), p. 321.
6 D. D. Home, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p 64.
7 Nandor Feodor, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

Dr. Ashburner[1] and in concert with S. C. Hall helped to establish the Spiritual Athenaeum.[2] These last years the old man was cared for by his pupil, Dr. E. S. Symes, who saw him through progressive stages of decline.[3] He had been replaced by Beard and others as family physician and probably had not seen Dickens for half a dozen years before his conversion.[4]

In 1863 *All The Year Round* had indeed become a kind of deputy spiritual magazine. In addition to Dickens's two pieces there appeared: *An Old Medium* (*AYR*, No. 217, June 20th); *Haunted Hoxton* (*AYR*, No. 218, June 27th); *Apparitions* (*AYR*, No. 236, October 31st); *A Monotonous SENSATION* (*AYR*, No. 243, December 19th).

In contrast 1864 was quiet. There were but two articles on the Spiritualists: *The Ghost of Mr. Senior* (*AYR*, No. 252, Febuary 20th) and *Lufkin on Davingpodge*—a thinly veiled attack on the Davenport Brothers—(*AYR*, No. 294, December 10th). For this year only one letter of Dickens on this subject appears in the *Nonesuch Letters*. Dated April 1st it is addressed to Mrs. Mary Nichols (an American lady contributor to *All The Year Round* residing in England). Notice how weary of being called on to investigate he has become.

> You do not understand me—I dare say it is my fault—on the subject of your " Test Medium ". I do not desire to see him and indeed altogether decline to see any person making those pretensions. I left those questions with you, not because I have the least scrap of belief in their being answered according to the truth, be because I thought it well that you should find out that they can *not* be answered. It is not at all in accordance with my reverence for the Great Mystery of Death and the existence beyond the grave, to put them myself through the interposition of any human creature. I should make a horrible pretence if I did so . . .[5]

The list of questions has not come down to us nor do we know to whom they were addressed in the Other World. We can only assume that the questions were put and that they were not answered.

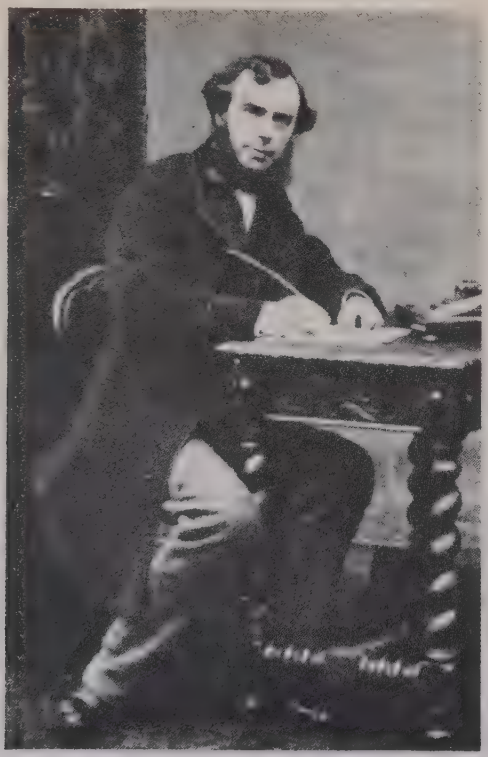
1865 was quieter even than 1864. Only one important anti-rapper paper, *Spirits on their Last Legs* (*AYR*, No. 328, August 5th) was published. In it the author called attention to a split in the ranks between those who endorsed the Davenports and those, Home among them, who denounced them. He wrote, too, of his own funny experiences with three mediums.

Early in 1866 D. D. Home opened in a series of public lectures on Spiritualism at Willis's Rooms in London[6] whereupon Dickens determined that he would do for him what he had done for Mrs. Hayden in 1852. Once again—but this time without Morley who

[1] Nandor Feodor, *op. cit.*, p. 124.
[2] D. D. Home, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 140. Established at 22 Sloane Street this was a spiritualist association of which for a time Mr. Home was resident secretary.
[3] *DNB, John Elliotson*, pp. 683-684.
[4] Except sporadically through 1861-1863 when Dickens and Forster, aided by Townshend and E. S. Dallas were attempting to atraighten out Dr. Elliotson's financial affairs which, like his health, were fast deteriorating. Dickens feared that an attack of apoplexy had affected Elliotson's brain. See *Nonesuch Letters*, Vol. III, *passim*.
[5] *Nonesuch Letters*, Vol. III, p. 384.
[6] *The Banner of Light*, Vol. XVIII, No. 26, March 17th, 1866.

had resigned from the staff the previous year—W. H. Wills was elected to do the investigating.[1]

His report, *At Home With The Spirits* (*AYR*), No. 358, March 3rd) described the detail of Home's lecture as well as the man himself.[2] He laughed at the medium's claim to have foreseen the asassination of President Lincoln in a crystal ball in 1862. Wills reminded his readers that a Mr. Addison had performed what the



W. H. Wills

Dickens House Collection

Spiritualists hailed as miracles and, declining to join them, had exposed the Davenports even as he challenged Home, who refused to accept. Wills testified that Addison had shown him how some of the tricks were done.

Rapper reaction was immediate and angry. They charged Wills with writing a damning report because he had not been recognised at the box office and had been obliged to pay for his seat.[3] Wills denied this but did admit he was miffed at being tricked into

[1] Jean Burton, *op. cit.*, p. 191. The Rappers seem immediately to have correctly attributed the article to Wills.

[2] Will's description must in part be discounted as calculated unfriendly caricature. A beautiful portrait of Home by Pickersgill at the College of Psychic Science in London reveals an attractive and prepossessing face and figure.

[3] Jean Burton, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

buying a half guinea seat when five shilling ones were empty.[1] The Rappers sent Wills an original of the Home circular which they alleged he had misquoted in his article, substituting the word fortune for future in the sentence:

> Much indeed of my own future must depend upon the issue of experiment.

Wills admitted his mistake but contended that the substance of the meaning was not changed whichever word was used, that Home had himself admitted that he received £25 on the occasion and that this kind of quibbling was an historical characteristic of Spiritualists.[2]

The Ghost at the Rath (*AYR*, No. 364, April 14th; *Ghosts in Court* (*AYR*, No. 368, May 12th) *Ghosts Garments* (*AYR*, No. 387, September 22nd); along with a tale of two of Eastern Djinns rounded out the spooky menu for 1866.

It must have been tiresome for the Editor of *All The Year Round* to have to explain continually—even after so many years of explaining—his opinion of the "spirits." To contributor Mrs. Francis Elliot, whose work he had gently criticised in the first part of his letter of September 12th, 1867, he reiterated:

> . . . I do not set myself up to pretend to know what the Almighty's laws are, as to desembodied spirits. I do not profess to be free from disagreeable impressions and apprehensions, even. But there are no reasons for calling that evidence, which is no evidence at all, or for taking for granted what cannot be taken for granted.[3]

The last month and a half of 1867 Charles Dickens was in the United States busy with his Reading Tour, but even so, he was not allowed to forget the "spirits." To John Bigelow, ex-Minister to France, who questioned him about Sir Bulwer Lytton's belief in Home's manifestations, Dickens confided that it could be explained by his friend's refusal to admit deafness; that whenever asked by the medium if he could hear the raps, he answered affirmatively in self defense,[4]

Off and on for years Home had been a guest at Lytton's town house in Park Lane or at Knebworth, his country house. The clairvoyant had been anxious to secure the novelist's support and was convinced that Lytton's preoccupation with the supernatural, his work in the Rosicrucian Order, and his extensive knowledge of magic would incline him to acceptance. He was mistaken: Lytton thought of Home as a born magician and of his tricks as witchcraft. He was pleased to have him around because he was exciting company and was capable of supplying background materials for his mystery stories.[5]

As for himself, Dickens had come to have a general aversion, if not an unqualified hatred, for Mr. Daniel Dunglas Home. When in 1866 that gentleman had attempted to enlarge his activities, through his natural, rather than supernatural, proclivity, and had

[1] *Doubtfully Divine Missions* (*AYR*, No. 367, May 5th, 1866. Presumably also by W. H. Wills. The author goes on to review famous historical ghosts commencing with a restatement of the case against The Cock-lane Ghost which Samuel Johnson and James Boswell had exploded.
[2] *Idem.*
[3] *Nonesuch Letters*, Vol. III, p. 548.
[4] Jean Burton, *op. cit.*, p. 149.
[5] *Ibid*, pp. 52-53.

been advertised as due to appear as Mr. Oakley in *The Jealous Wife* opening at St. James's Theatre on Monday, July 5th, Dickens denounced him to his erstwhile supporter:

July 25th, 1866.

My dear Trollope,

. . . Mr. Home . . . after trying to come out as an actor, first at Fechter's (where I had the honour of stopping him short), and then at the St. James's Theatre under Miss Herbert (where he was twice announced, and each time very mysteriously disappeared from the bills), was announced at the little theatre in Dean Street, Soho, as "a great attraction for one night only" to play last Monday. An appropriate dirty little rag of a bill, fluttering in the window of an obscure dairy behind the Strand, gave me this intelligence last Saturday. It is like enough that even that striking business did not come off, for I believe the public to have found out the scoundrel; in which lively and sustaining hope this leaves me at present,

Ever faithfully yours,

Charles Dickens.[1]

In striking contrast to this behaviour, Home's brethren in America extended their old enemy a gracious welcome. *The Banner of Light* carried notices of his readings and editorialised:

Charles Dickens—This eminent author must be indeed highly gratified with his reception in this country. He might remain two years in America, and not fulfil half the engagements that are waiting to be made for him. Invitations to read have been extended from hundreds of towns and cities. The same earnest desire to hear him still exists in this city [Boston], and not one-tenth of the persons who are anxious to listen to the sound of his voice have been gratified. No doubt Mr. Dickens's "Notes," on his return to England, will be wafted across the Atlantic in "anthems of praise."[2]

During much of 1869 and until his death 9th June 1870, Dickens was engaged in the planning and the writing of *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*. For the first time in a major work he had introduced the supernormal. There are suggestions of oriental mysticism woven about the Eurasian Landless twins, the hypnotic powers of John Jasper and his dream-apparitions. We have not seen Dickens's annotated copy of Owen's *Footfalls on The Boundary of Another World* (see footnote 1) but an inspection of our own copy reveals a number of possibilities he might have considered if he did intend to make *Drood* a tale of the supernatural.

Let us look briefly at what might have been. Perchance Dickens planned for Edwin to return as a ghost to haunt his Uncle Jack (the cover design may depict Jasper discovering Edwin in the crypt—not the disguised Helena as had been hitherto often suggested). Or it may be that Jasper was a Spiritualist, that Helena discovered this and masqueraded as Edwin in order to exploit his fear and force a confession. Possibly, but admittedly far-fetched, the disembodied spirit of Edwin might be working through Tartar or Datchery or even in Jasper himself to bring down his murderer.

[1] *The Dickensian*, Vol. XLVI (1950), p. 50.
[2] *The Banner of Light*, Vol. XXII, No. 17, January 11th, 1868.

But surely any such thing was only to have seemed to be—an appearance not a reality. If Dickens did elect to write a novel of the supernatural he would have taken unusual care that it could not be construed as an endorsement of Spiritualism and Spiritualists; he would expose the fraud or leave the solution of the mystery inexplicable as, in quite a different sense, it is.

The Third Phase

No time was lost inaugurating this last phase: Charles Dickens was scarcely buried when his spirit was evoked by an American Rapper:

> The following message was given at the Banner of Light Circle, through the Mediumship of Mr. [Mrs. ?] J. H. Conant, Tuesday afternoon, June 14th, 1870.
>
> I gave a communication at a friend's house in London, between the hours of eight and nine, English time, last evening. They being not, as a Yankee would say "well posted" in their spiritual matters, have doubted the authenticity of the communication, and they requested, if it was me, that I would come here and acknowledge it at as early an hour as possible. I have done so, hoping it may serve them for good.
>
> Charles Dickens
>
> I have been permitted to request you publish my brief message in your next issue.[1]

And this was but one of a flood allegedly from the great unbeliever. They persisted with irregular frequency for more than fifty years after his death. The late Sir Arthur Conan Doyle believed that the spirit of Dickens had appeared before him and cleared up the mystery in *Edwin Drood*.[2]

But the boldest of them all was a Mr. Thomas P. James of Boston, Massachusetts and Brattleboro, Vermont, who claimed to wield the spirit pen of Dickens. His story, including his explanation of the production of the post-mortem work, is a part of a curious volume entitled *Rifts in the Veil* (London, 1878).[3]

James's *Part Second of the Mystery of Edwin Drood by the Spirit Pen of Charles Dickens* etc. duly appeared, privately printed in 1873, but does not seem to have enjoyed a fraction of the popularity of the works written during Dickens's "Earth-life"[4] for *The Life and Adventures of Bockley Wickleheap* which was to follow[5] failed to appear. But perhaps James was satisfied. The main purpose of the Spiritualists had been served: in the Author's preface to the Spirit Drood Dickens recants, asks the sceptics to reserve their judgements and give sympathic attention to Rapper testimony, and, in effect, joins the Spiritualist host.

It is hardly necessary to point out how important to the Rappers was the outcome of this long war with Dickens. They

[1] *The Banner of Light*, Vol. XXVII, No. 15, June 25th, 1870.
[2] *The Dickensian*, Vol. XXIV (1028), pp. 64-66, pp. 176-177; Vol. XXV (1929), p. 64.
[3] Our copy was inscribed by the Editor and presented to Mr. James.
[4] J. Cuming Walter (*The Complete Edwin Drood*, Boston, 1913, p. 217) sums up serious criticism: "Judgement on this egregious production is in no way influenced by belief or disbelief in occult phenomena. The work is self-condemned by its futility, illiteracy, and hideous American mannerisms; the mystery itself becomes a nightmare, and the solution only deepens the obscurity.
[5] Thomas P. James, *Mystery of E. D. by the Spirit Pen of C.D.*, Medium's Preface, viii.

were more anxious to convert him than any of the others who took the field against them. Even if Sir David Brewster should finally accept them; even if Michael Faraday should eventually yield; even if they had, at last, ensnared Doctor Elliotson—to what purpose and toward what greater end? Could or would any of these influence hundreds, thousands as had Dickens? No. By 1860 they had come to the realisation that if Spiritualism was to prevail it must have in its van intelligent and popular personalities; they employed all their means toward securing them—and we have seen how various those means were. Dickens was early conscious of the plan and of his responsibility to remain level-headed, not to be overcome by the sheer momentum of the "madness". He finally concluded that *Modern Spiritualism* as exemplified by the Haydens, Howitts and Homes was but another Superstition, founded on Ignorance, that must be put down by being made so ridiculous that it would eventually be laughed out out of existence.

A FIVE-YEAR-OLD CRITIC OF *NICHOLAS NICKLEBY*

By William J. Carlton

AMONG the hundreds of correspondents, young and old, to whom Dickens had occasion to write, it may be doubted whether there was one of tenderer years than the very small boy to whom he addressed the following lines:

Doughty Street, London,
Twelfth December, 1838.

Respected Sir,

I have given Squeers one cut on the neck and two on the head, at which he appeared much surprised and began to cry, which, being a cowardly thing, is just what I should have expected from him—wouldn't you?

I have carefully done what you told me in your letter about the lamb and the two "sheeps" for the little boys. They have also had some good ale and porter, and some wine. I am sorry you didn't say *what* wine you would like them to have. I gave them some sherry, which they liked very much, except one boy, who was a little sick and choked a good deal. He was rather greedy, and that's the truth, and I believe it went the wrong way, which I say served him right, and I hope you will say so too.

Nicholas had his roast lamb, as you said he was to, but he could not eat it all, and says if you do not mind his doing so he should like to have the rest hashed tomorrow with some greens, which he is very fond of, and so am I. He said he did not like to have his porter hot, for he thought it spoilt the flavour, so

I let him have it cold. You should have seen him drink it. I thought he never would have left off. I also gave him three pounds of money, all in sixpences, to make it seem more, and he said directly that he should give more than half to his mamma and sister, and divide the rest with poor Smike. And I say he is a good fellow for saying so; and if anybody says he isn't I am ready to fight him whenever they like—there !

Fanny Squeers shall be attended to, depend upon it. Your drawing of her is very like, except that I don't think her hair is quite curly enough. The nose is particularly like hers, and so are the legs. She is a nasty disagreeable thing, and I know it will make her very cross when she sees it; and what I say is that I hope it may. You will say the same I know—at least I think you will.

I meant to have written you a long letter, but I cannot write very fast when I like the person I am writing to, because that makes me think about them, and I like you, and so I tell you. Besides, it is just eight o'clock at night, and I always go to bed at eight o'clock, except when it is my birthday, and then I sit up to supper. So I will not say anything more besides this—and that is my love to you and Neptune; and if you will drink my health every Christmas Day I will drink yours —come.

I am, Respected Sir,
Your affectionate Friend,
CHARLES DICKENS.

P.S. I don't write my name very plain, but you know what it is you know, so never mind.[1]

This letter was not sent through the post, but the envelope bore the inscription: " William Hastings Hughes Esquire, Donnington Priory. Favored by the Reverend R. H. Barham."

William Hastings Hughes was the fifth son of Dr. John Hughes, Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's Cathedral. Born at Donnington Priory, Uffington, Berks., in December, 1833, he was baptised in the following January at the parish church of Uffington. Three of his elder brothers, one of whom was later to achieve celebrity as the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, went to Rugby and Oxford, a fourth joined the Royal Artillery, and William Hastings was destined for the Navy. His godfathers were his uncle William and his grandmother's friend Thomas (afterwards Admiral Sir Thomas) Hastings. He was called William until he was about seven years old, after which his grandmother, Mrs. Mary Ann Hughes, a woman of strong character, insisted on his being called Hastings. Having a will of his own, however, he refused to take to the sea as a profession and later resumed the use of his full name.[2]

Dr. Hughes and his wife Margaret had long been on terms of intimacy with the Rev. Richard Harris Barham, minor Canon

[1] First printed in *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, edited by his sister-in-law and his eldest daughter, 1880, I. The original was presented to the Library of Colby College, Waterville, Maine, a few years ago by W. H. Hughes's grandson, George Forbes Hughes, of Jamaica Plain, Mass.

[2] W. H. Hughes, Introductory Sketch of Mrs. Hughes in *Letters and Recollections of Sir Walter Scott*, ed. H. G. Hutchinson, 1904, p. 4.

of St. Paul's, with whom Mrs. Hughes kept up a regular correspondence for nearly a quarter of a century. She was also a frequent correspondent of Sir Walter Scott and Southey, and to her inexhaustible fund of legendary lore Barham was indebted for many of the tales on which his *Ingoldsby Legends* were based. Another old friend and schoolfellow of Barham was Richard Bentley, and when *Bentley's Miscellany* was planned he readily accepted an invitation from the publisher to write something for the new magazine, stipulating that his incognito should be preserved and that "what I send to the *Miscellany* goes at once from me to the printer and is returned in proofs by him without any intermediate channel."[1] Thus it came about that the first number of *Bentley's Miscellany*, published on New Year's Day in 1837, contained some anonymous verses entitled "The 'Monstre' Balloon." They were a witty and topical skit on the exploits of Charles Green, whose great Nassau balloon had made its first ascent from Vauxhall Gardens in the previous September and two months later created an immense sensation by crossing the channel with eleven passengers, descending at Weilburg in Germany after a journey of some 500 miles in 18 hours.[2] The author of the verses was Barham, and "The Spectre of Tappington" in the next number of the *Miscellany* inaugurated the series of "Ingoldsby Legends" which was to become one of its most popular features. Dickens and Barham, it must be remembered, had not met at this time and were known to each other before 1838 only as "Boz" and "Thomas Ingoldsby."

Bentley's Miscellany was received regularly in the Hughes household and read with avidity by the whole family. Writing to the publisher in 1837, Barham told him that he had been trying to enlist Thomas Moore and "Mr. Hughes" as contributors.[3] Through his good offices two short translations of Anacreon by the eldest boy, George Edward Hughes, then a youth of 17, were printed in the the issues of September and November, 1838, over the pen-name "Buller, jun."

"When old 'Bentley' arrived at the school-house," wrote Tom Hughes in his diary, "we were all in astonishment, and not a little uplifted at this feat, which seemed to link the school-house with the great world of literature." George took it very quietly, mentioning it in his next letter home (September 1838): "'Tis pleasant, sure, to see oneself in print. I saw my production in Mr. Bentley's last number by the side of much more deserving ones. I was very much amused at the last number, and particularly with the report of the proceedings of the Mudfog Association. The idea of giving young noblemen and gentlemen a place on purpose for their pranks was delightful and likely I think to knock that sort of thing on the head.'"[4] One of the "Practical Suggestions on the necessity of providing some harmless and wholesome relaxation for the young noblemen of England,"

[1] *Life and Letters of R. H. Barham*, by his son [Richard Harris Dalton Barham], 1870, II, 20. This by-passing of the editor must have been galling to Dickens and may have marked the beginning of the strained relations which soon developed between him and Bentley.

[2] Dickens himself had given a graphic account of one of Green's ascents in "Vauxhall by Day" (*Morning Chronicle*, October 26th, 1836, reprinted in *Sketches by Boz*).

[3] *Life and Letters of R. H. Barham*, II, 11.

[4] T. Hughes, *Memoir of a Brother*, 5th ed., 1873, pp. 29-30.

submitted by Mr. Coppernose to the second meeting of the Mudfog Association for the Advancement of Everything, was a satire in Dickens's happiest vein on the boisterous behaviour of some of the more unruly elements in the young aristocracy.[1]

A few months previously George Hughes had written to his brother Tom: " Have you read Mr. Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby* ? I like it very much, though I thought some parts of it are very much exaggerated and unnatural; particularly that about the school . . . I am sure no one can help laughing at it; but I think *Oliver Twist* much superior."[2]

A much younger member of the family, William Hastings Hughes, had also followed the fortunes of Nicholas Nickleby with eager attention as his father read from the successive instalments in the familiar green wrappers. Sixty-five years were to elapse before he placed on record, on November 19th, 1903, his recollection of the impression made upon him up to the time of the publication of Part 9, nearly half-way through the book. "When *Nicholas Nickleby* was coming out, in monthly numbers, I was between four and five years old. My father showed me the pictures, and told me the story. I was much disgusted at the ending, because no proper rewards were given to Nicholas and the boys, nor punishment to Squeers and family. He said that the ending might be altered by the author, if I could persuade him to take my view of the matter, and that if I would dictate a letter it should be sent to him: which I proceeded to do. No copy of the letter was kept, but its purport is sufficiently clear from Dickens's reply, which came to me ' favored by ' Canon Barham, author of the *Ingoldsby Legends*, who must have seen Dickens just before coming to make us a visit."[3]

Some twenty years later, on August 2nd, 1858, the little boy of 1838 married Emily Adelaide, eldest daughter of the Rev. George Clark, M.A., Rector of Tenby, Pembrokeshire, at Tenby.[4] She was the first cousin of his elder sister Jane's husband, Nassau Senior, and most of their married life was spent in Spain. They had three sons, but ten days after the birth of their only daughter, Emily, Mrs. Hughes died of fever and the father returned sadly to England with his small family who were mothered and cared for by Mrs. Senior, with whom they lived. Hughes, who was engaged in the sherry trade, lived later in Chelsea; but when he failed in business the boys emigrated to Texas. Financial difficulties, in which his brother Tom became involved, led to his bankruptcy in December, 1875.[5] About this time he, too, left England for America. A small pamphlet of which he was the author, *A Shilling's-Worth of Sherry* (*with Three Ha'p'orth of Love thrown in*), was printed at Cincinnati, in 1882.[6] On February 16th, 1887, Hastings Hughes married again, at Milton, Massachusetts. His second wife, Sarah Forbes, the daughter of the American banker and railway magnate, John Murray Forbes, was twenty years

[1] *Bentley's Miscellany*, September, 1838, pp. 221-3.
[2] T. Hughes, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
[3] *Colby Library Quarterly*, November, 1954, p. 257.
[4] *Gentleman's Magazine*, September, 1858, p. 307.
[5] Edward G. Mack and W. H. G. Armytage, *Thomas Hughes*, 1952, p. 215.
[6] *American Catalogue*, 1876-1884, New York, 1885, p. 194; Joseph Foster Kirk, *Supplement to Allibone's Critical Dict. of English Literature*, 1891, II, 868.

younger than himself. On January 16th, 1888, a son, Walter Scott Hughes, was born to them, and on September 23rd, 1891, a daughter, Dorothea Murray Hughes. He was still living at Milton twelve years later when he committed to paper what he remembered of his juvenile correspondence with Dickens. whose letter he had carefully preserved. At the same time he wrote down his recollection of his first and only meeting with the novelist:

> " Fifteen years or so afterwards I saw Dickens, acting with other literary men, in aid of the Guild of Literature and Art; but never met him till some few months before his death. I was in London at the time, and his daughter Mrs. Collins had asked me to take an old man's part for herself and her sister in a little comedy which was to be given to help some charity. I had gladly complied, telling her that, as I had been her father's correspondent before she was born, she and her sister could well regard me as a parent on the occasion. Dickens perfectly remembered the exchange of letters and his amusement at my intense baby interest in his story. He coached us for the play with infinite pains and patience. When I last saw him he was seated between his two daughters, on the platform, at the back of the temporary stage, chatting to them and swinging his legs, ' as jolly as a sandboy ' at the success of the performance—and at its being well over. I should have said then that he was as likely to live another twenty years, and enjoy life, as any man of his age. He died three weeks afterwards."[1]

Hughes played the part of Dr. Holbein in *The Prima Donna* on June 2nd, 1870, at Cromwell House, the home of Mr. and Mrs. (afterwards Sir Charles and Lady) Freake. Other rôles were filled by Dickens's two daughters, F. Crawford Grove and Herman C. Merivale.[2] Shortly after the novelist's death one week later Merivale wrote, in a letter to the *Times*, that he had been at Dickens's house in Hyde Park Place for some hours almost every day during the last weeks of May for the rehearsals.[3] Though suffering from lameness, he directed everything with "a boy's spirit and a boy's interest in his favourite art." On the night (a stifling one) he was behind the scenes as prompter and stage manager and went through the whole thing with infectious enjoyment.[4]

William Hastings Hughes died of pneumonia at Milton, Mass., on April 20th, 1907, aged 73 years 4 months. His widow survived him by nearly ten years.

The co-operation of Miss Diana Hughes; Mr. Noel C. Peyrouton, Boston, Mass.; Mr. Edwin Sanford, Belmont, Mass.; and the Town Clerk of Milton, Mass., in the preparation of this article is gratefully acknowledged. To the authorities of Colby College, Waterville, Maine, I am indebted for permission to quote from the *Colby Library Quarterly*.

1 *Colby Library Quarterly*, November, 1954, p. 258.
2 P. Fitzgerald, *Life of Charles Dickens*, 1905, II, 315.
3 F. G. Kitton, *Charles Dickens by Pen and Pencil*, Supplement, p. 30.
4 J. B. Van Amerongen, *The Actor in Dickens*, 1927, p. 78

DICKENS AND THE RAGGED SCHOOLS

P. A. W. Collins
Warden of Vaughan College, University of Leicester

RECORDING Dickens's activities during the year 1843, John Forster notes that he gave " eager welcome to the remarkable institution of Ragged Schools, which, begun by a shoemaker of Portsmouth and a chimney-sweep of Windsor and carried on by a peer of the realm, has had results of incalculable importance to society."[1] Readers of Dickens's correspondence, especially with Miss Coutts, and of his miscellaneous journalism, will recall a number of comments on these schools, spread over the years from 1843. Indeed, the biographer of Lord Shaftesbury (the " peer of the realm " Forster refers to) claims that Dickens " laboured on behalf of the Ragged Schools in a different sphere, though with no less zeal " than Shaftesbury himself, and that Shaftesbury " always expressed the warmest appreciation " of the novelist's efforts; while the historian of the Ragged School Union calls him " a friend of the Society throughout his life."[2] These claims seem excessive; but Dickens was certainly the most important literary supporter of Ragged Schools, in their earlier years. He was active on their behalf within a few months of their becoming known to the public, and at a time when (as a Ragged School spokesman put it twenty years later) they were generally " sneered at by worldlings, or, at best, were merely regarded as another illustration of the eccentric ideas of Evangelicals."[3]

" I found my first Ragged School," Dickens wrote, " in an obscure place called West Street, Saffron Hill, pitifully struggling for life, under every disadvantage."[4] This was, he says, *the* first Ragged School, but this is true only in that it was the first to call itself so. The name had been invented when its organisers first appealed for funds, in *The Times* for February 18th, 1843; their advertisement, headed " Ragged Schools—Field-Lane Sabbath School," announced that the establishment had existed for over a year, teaching adults and children on Sundays and on two week-day evenings. But these were not the first Ragged Schools, nor were the shoemaker or chimney-sweep whom Forster praises really the " founders " of the idea, important though they were in the mythology of the movement. (A picture of John Pounds, the shoemaker, teaching his ragamuffins had inspired Dr. Guthrie of Edinburgh to his enthusiastic efforts for such children.) As Shaftesbury himself confessed, however, " We are not able to say when exactly the first beginning was made, nor to apportion the merit of the earlier efforts."[5]

1 Forster, *Life of Charles Dickens* (1872-4), edited by J. W. T. Ley, 1928, p. 297.
2 Edwin Hodder, *The Life and Work of Lord Shaftesbury*, 1886, 1.487; C. J. Montague, *Sixty Years in Waifdom; or, the Ragged School Movement in English History*, 1904, p. 360.
3 *Ragged School Union Magazine*, XVI, 1864, 50. This *Magazine* (hereafter cited as *RSUM*) is a valuable source not only of the history of the Union but also of the social history of the London poor in the second half of the nineteenth century.
4 "A Sleep to Startle Us," *Household Words*, May 13th, 1852. This and all Dickens's other articles from *HW* and other journals referred to in this essay, except those written in collaboration with others, are reprinted in *Miscellaneous Papers*.
5 *Quarterly Review*, LXXIX, 1846, 130: a moving and influential essay on the first years of the Ragged School Union. Shaftesbury was, of course, Lord Ashley until 1852, but for convenience I shall refer to him throughout this essay by his later title.

Briefly, the origin of the movement was as follows. Field Lane Ragged School was one of various such establishments, some dating from about 1800, founded locally and independently in London and in some provincial cities by good-hearted citizens, usually humble laymen, to give some religious instruction to the very poorest children. The London City Mission, founded in 1835, soon established several such schools " exclusively for children raggedly clothed "; while in Aberdeen, independently of the London efforts, an Industrial School was opened in 1841 by Sheriff Watson of that city.[1] The Ragged School idea achieved coherence and effectiveness, however, through the activities of a young lawyer's clerk named S. R. Starey. It was he who, as Treasurer of Field Lane, devised *The Times* advertisement and invented the name " Ragged Schools " (Shaftesbury later nicknamed him therefore " the godfather of Ragged Schools "); he wrote to various notabilities, inviting their support, and among the first to reply was Shaftesbury, who thus began his lifelong connection with the movement; and in April 1844, it was through Starey's initiative that the dozen or so Schools of this kind were persuaded to combine into the Ragged School Union.[2] The Union did not in general found new Schools, but acted as a central propagandist, fund-raising, advisory and inspectorial body. With the help of the Press, especially *Chambers's Journal*, and through the prestige of its President, Lord Shaftesbury, the Union rapidly popularised the Ragged School idea, so that after only five years Shaftesbury could feel confident in " claiming for the institution of Ragged Schools the rank of a recognised social movement." The Queen and Prince Albert were, by now, subscribers; many noblemen and bishops were Vice-Presidents; the Government had granted 150 free passages to Australia to boys from the Schools; income had increased six-fold, and there were 82 Schools, with regular daily attendance of 8,000 and a further 8,500 on Sundays, taught by 110 paid and 850 voluntary teachers. By 1870—the year of Dickens's death and of Forster's Education Act—there were 196 Schools, with average attendances of 23,052 on weekdays, 29,778 on Sundays, with a further 9,179 on Sunday evenings, with 434 paid and 3,201 voluntary teachers.[3]

" The great aim of Ragged Schools, we confess and rejoice," wrote the Editor of their *Magazine*, " is to impart religious instruction. Other objects they undoubtedly have; but these are all subordinated to the chief end of bringing neglected and ignorant children within reach of the doctrine of Christ."[4] They were a manifestation of Evangelical piety; the Union offices were at Exeter Hall. The Schools were intended for the lowest of children, whom no other schools would attract or tolerate; " the moment we get out of the mire and the gutter," Shaftesbury was always

[1] C. J. Montague, 34, 39. The Aberdeen Industrial School, with its stress on vocational training as well as religious and secular instruction, later exerted a great influence on English developments.

[2] See letters from Starey in *RSUM*, I, 1849, 55-6, and from another founder-member, XI, 1859, 145-7.

[3] *RSUM*, I, 1849, 1, 101; XXII, 1870, 124. See the articles on Ragged Schools in *Chambers's Edinburgh Journal* between 1845 and 1847: III, 357-8; IV, 141-4, 305-8; V, 75-6, 408-9; VII, 93-5, 161-4, 399-400; especially the first of these references, about a visit to Field Lane Ragged School (June 7th, 1845).

[4] *RSUM*, VIII, 1856, 232. This was part of the official reply to Henry Mayhew, a persistent and irreverent critic of the Schools.

warning his colleagues, " that moment we get out of our sphere."[1] Most Schools admitted adults as well as children, sometimes providing separate classes for them. The pupils, often homeless and underfed as well as raggedly clothed, were verging on criminality, if they were not already thieves; they would be absent from School for a few weeks, returning with a nonchalant, " Sorry I could not come before; had ten days of Bridewell." The Schools' primary purpose, however, was preventive rather than reformatory, though later the Union established some specifically Reformatory institutions and was very active in the Reformatory movement of the 1850s. The first Schools offered only religious instruction, but soon their activities widened: first, to reading-lessons on week-day evenings, so that pupils could read the Bible; then to " industrial training " so that they could earn a living in an honest trade; then to the offer of food and clothing and even beds to the deserving regular attenders; and jobs were found or created for the worthy, while others were despatched as emigrants to America or the Colonies. Developments up to 1852 are summarised in an excellent pamphlet by an inspiring leader of the Union:

> There is Scriptural instruction as the foundation, then Secular instruction, Industrial classes, Street employments, Refuges, Feeding schools, Adult, Mothers, and Infants classes, Clothing and Sick funds, Savings banks, Libraries and Reading rooms, Magazines and periodicals, Prayer meetings, Lectures, Ragged Churches, and Emigration.[2]

The teachers were members of various Protestant denominations, which contrived to co-operate more harmoniously in this sphere of education than elsewhere. Usually the voluntary teachers undertook the Sunday work, and possibly one week-day evening; the paid teachers—schoolmasters, and the " industrial " instructors in tailoring, cobbling and needlework—took most of the daytime classes, and some evening and Sunday work as well. The Government gave very little financial assistance: the Emigration grant was only given in one year, and though Ragged Schools could later apply for funds from the Committee of Education, the Regulations were too strict for many, and were unacceptable on grounds of religious scruple to others. The Ragged School movement, both in its origins and its subsequent history, was a voluntary charitable organisation.

Long before the Ragged Schools announced their existence and solicited his support, Dickens was familiar with the areas in which they operated and the problems they sought to solve. *Sketches by Boz, Oliver Twist* and *Nicholas Nickleby* described such typical Ragged districts as St. Giles's and Saffron Hill; Fagin's den was " in a house near Field Lane." Moreover, the early novels had frequently sounded a theme of much of his later journalism—the connection between ignorance and crime, and the injustice of punishing children who had never been given the chance of learning an honest way of life.[3] Dickens was already advocating,

[1] *RSUM*, IV, 1852, 13.
[2] John MacGregor, *Ragged Schools: their Rise, Progress and Results*, N.D. [1852], 22.
[3] E.g. Sikes on the Juvenile Delinquent Society, *OT*, XIX; Nicholas's reflections at the beginning of Chapter LIII, *NN*; the convict's mother's outburst, *OCS*, XLV; the apostrophe to moralists, *MChuz*, XIII.

as a remedy to these shocking conditions, Education and Emigration; this was, of course, a staple Radical prescription and had been repeated, just about the time when he heard of the Ragged Schools, by his admired teacher Carlyle.[1] Four years later, Dickens was to embody this idea in his running of Urania Cottage, the Home for Homeless Women.

There was, then, much about the Ragged School work that Dickens was predisposed to admire. But there were some elements in its ethos very uncongenial to him. Exeter Hall was anathema to the creator of Stiggins and Chadband, to the author of *Sunday under Three Heads*; as he wrote in 1848, "It might be laid down as a very good general rule of social and political guidance, that whatever Exeter Hall champions, is the thing by no means to be done."[2] He was strongly opposed to such Evangelical causes as Temperance and Sabbatarianism, and though he naturally admired Shaftesbury ("the Children's Champion") and later became personally friendly with him, he publicly if reluctantly criticised him for his intemperate zeal in such matters.[3] It is not surprising that he felt some impatience with him, and that both on grounds of principle and for other reasons he was a somewhat critical supporter of the Ragged Schools. Indeed, as we shall see, the only Ragged School in his novels is presented satirically, with little recognition of its positive value. This should remind us, however, of the frequent disjunction between Dickens the novelist and Dickens the journalist and man of affairs. And that he did give so much support to the Ragged Schools should remind us, too, of his tolerance; he was willing to work for and with these pious enthusiasts, alien though their outlook was from his in many respects, because they were at least doing something in noisome and dangerous areas where few other agents of civilisation cared or dared to penetrate.

The first surviving reference by Dickens to Ragged Schools occurs in a letter to Miss Coutts dated September 5th, 1843, less than six months after *The Times* advertisement for Field Lane appeared. There he apologises for not yet having reported to her about them, though he has obtained some information and intends to visit them shortly. A week later he writes to Starey, the Field Lane Treasurer:

> I take a great interest in the advertisement for the ragged School; and am deeply impressed by a sense of the great benevolence and importance of the scheme. I have also promised a wealthy and influential person to whom you made application

[1] Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present*, published April 1843, Book IV, Chapter III; cf. his *Chartism*, 1839, X. "No man knows your books better than I," Dickens wrote to Carlyle (July 13th, 1854). Carlyle, it may be noted, later expressed approval of the Ragged School idea: see David Williamson, *Lord Shaftesbury's Legacy*, 1924, p. 38.

[2] "The Niger Expedition," *The Examiner*, August 19th, 1848. Here, as in *Bleak House*, he was attacking what he considered the excessive and misguided Evangelical concern with Foreign Missions; see his letter to Revd. Henry Christopherson, July 9th, 1852, defending the episode of Jo's sitting bereft on the steps of the Society for the Propogation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (*Letters of Charles Dickens*, edited by Walter Dexter, 1938, 2.400-1).

[3] Forster (p. 540) says Shaftesbury first dined in Dickens's house in 1852. Dickens's early contacts with him are shown in letters to Fitzgerald, December 29th, 1838, and Southwood Smith, December 15th, 1840 (Hodder, *Shaftesbury*, 1.227; *Letters*, 1.282). See his later tribute to him, in his Metropolitan Sanitary Association speech, May 10th, 1851, and his disagreement over Sabbatarianism, in "The Sunday Screw," *HW*, June 22nd, 1850.

for support, that I would see your pupils, and take an opportunity of being present in the school.[1]

He proposes to come with some friends, insisting that they should "*see it in its usual aspect.*" The following month produces eight surviving letters arising from his visit to the Ragged School—some evidence of his enthusiasm for the cause and his desire to increase its effectiveness.

The long report to Miss Coutts, dated September 16th, gives an admirable description of the Field Lane Schools, with some sound suggestions about improvements. Even Dickens, familiar with this Saffron Hill area and with the jails filled with its products, was shocked by "the dire neglect of soul and body exhibited in these children." He praises the masters—"extremely quiet, honest, good men," well-grounded in the excellent Glasgow system of elementary education, and trying to "reach the boys by kindness." Their moral courage, he adds, "is beyond all praise . . . Their office is worthy of the apostles." He applauds their decision to concentrate first of all on instilling some elementary sense of right and wrong in their pupils, before worrying about their illiteracy, and he stresses "the viciousness of insisting on creeds and forms in educating such miserable beings . . . To talk of catechisms, outward and visible signs, and inward and spiritual graces, to these children is a thing no Bedlamite would do, who saw them." But much could be done, if more money were available: "the house they are in, is like an ugly dream," and "above all, if they could provide some convenience for washing; it would be an immense advantage." He commends the Schools to Miss Coutts as "an experiment most worthy of your charitable hand," and promises her some further information, as he is returning to the Schools "to offer strong suggestions to the Masters" on certain topics.[2] Miss Coutts was duly moved, and Dickens passed on to Starey her enquiries about the cost of certain desirable improvements, but he goes on to criticise some of the teaching:

> . . . it seems to me of vital importance that no persons, however well intentioned, should perplex the minds of these unfortunate creatures with religious mysteries that young people with the best advantages can but imperfectly understand. I heard a lady visitor the night I was among you propounding questions in reference to the "Lamb of God" which I most unquestionably would not suffer any one to put to my children; recollecting the immense absurdities that were suggested to my childhood by the like injudicious catechising.[3]

He asks whether Starey's colleagues would agree to confining all voluntary teachers expressly to broad Christian truths, without

[1] September 12th, 1843, *Letters*, 1.539. Dickens's biographers have often said that he visited the Ragged Schools at Miss Coutts's request, but the terms of this letter suggest that he had independently become interested, either because Starey had written to him or through seeing *The Times*. He quotes *The Times* advertisement in a letter on "Crime and Education" (*Daily News*, February 4th, 1846), saying that he first became aware of Ragged Schools through reading it: whereupon, "I wrote to the masters of this particular school to make some further enquiries, and went myself soon afterwards."

[2] *Letters to Angela Burdett Coutts*, edited by Edgar Johnson, 1953, p. 50-4. Dickens describes this first visit to Field Lane Schools twice again, in the *Daily News* letter of 1846 and in "A Sleep to Startle Us" in 1852; in both these, he is more critical of "the system pursued . . . if indeed there be one." Probably he gave the pious Miss Coutts a more favourable and tactful account, to excite her benevolence. His misgivings about one (untrained) lady teacher appear in his letter to Starey, quoted below; the male teachers were, presumably, better instructed.

[3] September 24th, 1843, *Letters*, 1.541.

such theological niceties. Miss Coutts, at least, was satisfied by her enquiries; unlike Dickens, she was warmly disposed towards Evangelicals. She sent £10, and remained until her death in 1906 " one of the best and oldest friends of the Ragged School Union," some of her later Ragged School benevolence in the Westminster area being again directed by Dickens's advice.[1]

Soon Dickens was extending his Ragged School activities beyond merely soliciting the private benevolence of a Miss Coutts. At Starey's suggestion, he undertook to approach the Government with enquiries whether a Grant might be forthcoming from the Committee of Council on Education. (Presumably Starey thought Dickens the most influential of the supporters he had gained by then.) Dickens asked Miss Coutts to interest her philanthropic relative Lord Sandon in these negotiations.[2] The Government was unmoved; indeed in the *Daily News* letter two years later Dickens remarked that he had approached the Government " with some faint hope that the vastness of the question would supersede the Theology of the Schools, and that the Bench of Bishops might adjust the latter question, after some small grant had been conceded. I made the attempt; and have heard no more of the subject from that hour." Presumably he was making a further such attempt when, a few months after that, he " had a good deal to write for Lord John [Russell] about the Ragged Schools."[3]

His attempts to aid the cause in another way also came to nothing at the time. On the day he sent to Miss Coutts that " sledge-hammer account of the Ragged schools," he wrote to Macvey Napier, editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, offering him an article on the education of the poor, provided Napier would allow him to argue the inappropriateness of Church Catechisms and all " mysteries and squabbles for forms . . . to the state of ignorance that now prevails." A further letter, a month later, accepts Napier's insistence on tact in stating this; but no article was written, and Forster implies that Napier would not accept Dickens's outspokenness.[4] In fact, the fault was Dickens's: he was busy, then he had a misunderstanding with Napier about the deadline, and finally the family move to Italy caused a further postponement.[5] But a letter to Starey (which has not appeared in any edition of the *Letters*) shows that Dickens was still seeking information for the *Review* article in February 1844. He asks Starey to call upon him when convenient, and would he please note down

> . . . any little facts or details connected with the ragged School, which you think it would benefit the design to have publicly known ? . . .
>
> The kind of thing I wish to know is—your average number of scholars—whether it increases or falls off—whether any boys

1 C. J. Montague, *op. cit.*, 142, 161, 314, 364. *Martin Chuzzlewit*, written during this period 1843-4, was dedicated to Miss Coutts, " with the True and Warmest Regard of the Author."

2 These sentences are based on unpublished letters from Starey, October 10th, 1843, and to Miss Coutts, October 17th, 1843, transcripts of which I have seen through the courtesy of Mrs. Madeline House, and which I quote by kind permission of the Pierpont Morgan Library. Cf. Starey's letter of October 18th, 1843, in *Coutts Letters*, 57.

3 June 28th, 1846, Forster, 400.

4 Forster, 298. See letters to Napier, September 16th and October 17th, 1843, *Letters*, 1.540, 543.

5 *Letters*, 1.543, 565, 601. A similar fate overtook Dickens's promises to write for the *Edinburgh Review* articles on Infant Labour, in 1841, and Capital Punishment, in 1845.

are pretty constant in their attendance—whether after absenting themselves, they return again—whether the ignorance of their parents be one of your rocks ahead—and the like. In short, I think I can turn any result of your experience and observation of these unfortunate creatures to the account you would desire.

Pray, mention to me the discouraging as well as the encouraging circumstances, for they are equally a part of the sad case; and without a knowledge of them, it is impossible to state it forcibly.

You are at perfect liberty to mention this to the masters in the School. But beyond this, or such other limits as you may consider necessary, I could wish our correspondence to be confidential.[1]

A few weeks later, Dickens arranged to visit the Ragged School with Forster, Stanfield and Maclise, perhaps with a view to obtaining further information for the *Review* article.[2]

The pace of his Ragged School activities slackens during the next few years. During much of this time he was abroad, in Italy 1844-5 and in Switzerland 1846-7; on his return from Italy he was busy with the forthcoming *Daily News*, and likewise when he returned from Switzerland in February 1847 he was preoccupied with Miss Coutts's Urania Cottage, which opened later that year. Scattered through this period there are a few references to Ragged Schools—the *Daily News* letter and the briefing of Lord Russell in 1846, a commendation of Schools of Industry in *The Examiner* in 1848, and a visit to a School, in company with John Leech and the magistrate A'Becket in 1849.[3] (On this latter occasion, Dickens was probably in search of possible candidates for Urania Cottage: he often visited Ragged Schools for this purpose, though he usually found their girls too bad for admittance.[4]) Most important of these references is the signed *Daily News* letter, published on February 4th, 1846, during his brief editorship. After recalling his first visit to the Field Lane schools, in their squalid surroundings, he urged his readers to see the Schools for themselves and to subscribe towards their funds, though he is not silent about his reservations:

I have no desire to praise the system pursued in the Ragged Schools; which is necessarily very imperfect, if indeed there be one. So far as I have any means of judging of what is taught there, I should individually object to it, as not being sufficiently secular, and as presenting too many religious mysteries and difficulties, to minds not sufficiently prepared for their reception. But I should very imperfectly discharge in myself the duty I wish to urge and impress on others, if I allowed any such doubt

[1] February 1st, 1844. From the MS. at John Kirk House. I must thank Mr. C. W. Richards, Assistant Secretary to the Shaftesbury Society, for showing me this MS. and for lending me various records of the Ragged School Union. This letter was printed (with minor inaccuracies) by C. J. Montague, *Sixty Years . . .*, 363-4.

[2] February 18th, 1844, Forster, 323.

[3] *Letters*, 2.182, November 1st, 1849. Leech was interested in Ragged Schools, and designed the cover for the *RSUM* in January 1854. So, for another issue, did another of Dickens's friends, George Cruikshank, whose well-known drawing of the West Street (Field Lane) Ragged School is reproduced as an illustration to O. Sack's "Dickens and the Field Lane Ragged Schools," *The Dickensian*, IV, 1908, 316-8.

[4] See, e.g., *Coutts Letters*, 171-7, 187 (1850-1). Some unpublished letters record other such visits.

of mine to interfere with my appreciation of the efforts of these teachers, or my true wish to promote them by any slight means in my power.

A few weeks later, the *Daily News* for February 21st reported a lecture on Ragged Schools by Lord Kinnaird: "several distinguished individuals," it noted, has visited and commended the Schools, including "Lord Ashley, Lord Robert Grosvenor, Lord Sandon, Hon. W. F. Cowper, Charles Dickens, Esq., Lady Troubridge, and Lady Alicia Lambart." Dickens, it will be noted, is the only un-titled person mentioned.

Dickens's next burst of Ragged School activity begins with the establishment of *Household Words* in March 1850. Its policy was "the raising up of those that are down, and the general improvement of our social condition," and if Dickens needed reminding of the claims to attention of London's illiterate children, he had received it in the famous episode of the crossing-sweeper boy George Ruby in January of that year. (His evidence at Guildhall, as has often been noted, suggested Jo's at "the Inkwich," two years later.[1]) It was for the George Rubys and the Jos of London that the Ragged Schools existed. In the fourth number of *Household Words* Dickens was protesting against Government extravagance on Model Prisons; where, he asked, was "our Model House of Youthful Industry, where our Model Ragged School . . . ?" and a few months later he made very much the same remark in the final number of *David Copperfield*. At the end of the year he published his "December Vision": he hears "a low dull howl of Ignorance," and sees "Thirty thousand children, hunted, flogged, imprisoned, but not taught," while around them the sects squabble and nothing is done. He returned to the theme a few weeks later in "The Last Words of the Old Year" ("Woe, woe! can the State devise no better sentence for its little children! Will it never sentence them to be taught!") These are the first of many such "visions" in *Household Words*, though they have a long ancestry in Dickens's work, back to the two children in *A Christmas Carol*—"wretched, abject, frightful, hideous, miserable . . . This boy is Ignorance. This girl is Want."[2]

Household Words contained a number of articles describing and appraising various Ragged Schools; the first of these appeared during its third and fourth months of publication. These articles, not written by Dickens, must have expressed opinions congenial to his own, for he strictly censored all contributions and made them accord to his own policies. The first of them concerned the Pye Street Ragged Schools, in a shocking area of Westminster ("the moral plague-spot of the whole kingdom"), and the nearby Ragged Dormitory and Colonial Training School of Industry, established by the Ragged School Union as a reformatory institution; the second article described the origins, achievements and

[1] See H. House, *The Dickens World*, 1941, p. 32. Ruby's case attracted attention: the *RSUM* for February 1850 reprinted it from *The Times*, and it was well enough remembered to be referred to eighteen months later in *HW* (August 30th, 1851, Vol. III, 548).

[2] End of Stave III. The *Carol* was begun in October 1843, a few weeks after Dickens's first Ragged School experience, and these children probably echo his Field Lane memories. See John Butt, "*A Christmas Carol:* its Origin and Design," *The Dickensian*, LI, 1954, 15-18.

running-costs of this Ragged Dormitory.[1] More such articles were to follow, from various contributors, generally expressing admiration for Ragged School activities, including the famous Shoeblack Brigade, various reformatory efforts, and the Training-ships (still familiar to us as the "Arethusa"). Of particular interest are those articles in which Dickens collaborates with another writer—which, in effect, often means his cutting or adding to the original text. Sometimes it is quite easy to spot his share in the writing: here are two examples.

In a "Chip" (the title for short pieces in *Household Words*), Wills reprints a letter testifying to the success of some emigrants from the Westminster Ragged Dormitory, and refers to letters from the boys themselves showing that they are "well-doing, and thoroughly reformed." What follows is one paragraph, which must be Dickens's contribution: I therefore reprint it entire.

> But our readers will distinctly understand that, in advocating the cause of such an establishment, we do so, only as it tends to mitigate a monstrous evil already in existence. To endow such Institutions, and leave the question of National Education in its present shameful state, would be to maintain a cruel absurdity to which we are most strongly opposed. The compulsory industrial education of neglected children, and the severe punishment of neglectful and unnatural parents, are reforms to which we must come, doubt it who may. We can no more hope to make any great impression upon crime, without these changes, than we could hope to extinguish Mount Vesuvius, in eruption, with a watering pot, or stop its flow of lava with a knitting-needle.[2]

The phraseology of the final sentence, as well as the tone and idea of the whole paragraph, clearly identify Dickens.

My second instance of collaboration is the article "Boys to Mend," credited to Henry Morley and Dickens. The body of this concerns the Philanthropic Society's famous Farm School reformatory at Red Hill, and this is clearly Morley's handiwork. Dickens had written from Dover to his sub-editor Wills, "Sitting down this morning to Morley's Boys to Mend, I could not take to it on the short notice, and thought of the enclosed instead. You shall have the rest (about three slips) by tomorrow's post."[3] There is no evidence that Dickens had visited Red Hill; he had been holidaying in Dover in recent weeks. Perhaps he touched up Morley's phrasing, but he certainly added the long second paragraph, and a concluding paragraph. The phraseology and ideas can be paralleled elsewhere in Dickens; quotations earlier and later in my essay will suggest themselves for comparison. The article begins to complaining that no one seems to bother about

[1] "The Devil's Acre," June 22nd, 1850, by Alexander MacKay, and "The Power of Small Beginnings," July 20th, 1850, by W. H. Wills. A full list of Ragged School articles in *HW* and *AYR* will be found in my annotated bibliography, *Dickens's Periodicals: Articles on Education* (Vaughan College, Leicester, 1957). I must thank Miss D. L. Minards, of Dickens House, for allowing me to consult the typescript copy of the Contributors Book, which gives the authorship of *HW* articles.

[2] *HW*, April 5th, 1851, Vol. III, 41-2.

[3] August 12th, 1852, *Letters*, 2.408. "The enclosed" was presumably "Our Vestry" (*HW*, August 28th, 1852). Dickens had written to Wills on August 1st noting the success of his similar article "Our Honourable Friend," which "seems to be making a great noise."

the ignorant and delinquent boys on the streets. Nowadays many good people will reply, " O! but there are the Ragged Schools!" But, admitting the devotion and worthiness of the Ragged School teachers,

> we still must not disguise the plain fact that [Ragged Schools] are, at best, a slight and ineffectual palliative of an enormous evil. They want system, power, means, authority, experienced and thoroughly trained teachers . . . Good intentions alone, will never be a sufficient qualification for such a labour, while this world lasts. We have seen something of ragged schools from their first establishment, and have rarely seen one, free from very injudicious and mistaken teaching. And what they *can* do, is so little, relatively to the gigantic proportions of the monster with which they have to grapple, that if their existence were to be accepted as a sufficient excuse for leaving ill alone, we should hold it far better that they had never been.

There follows a record of a visit to Red Hill, which is highly commended; Dickens then, I feel confident, adds this paragraph, which begins and ends with the phrase he had recently used as title of a striking article:

> Our honourable friend! The system must be devised, the administrators must be reared, the preventible young criminals must be prevented, the State must put its Industrial and Farm Schools first, and its prisons last—and to this complexion you must come. You may put the time off a little, and destroy (not irresponsibly) a few odd thousands of immortal souls in the meantime; but, the change must come. It were better for you, and the whole constituent body of Verbosity, to come to it with a good grace; for the thing itself is as sure as Death, our honourable friend.[1]

It will be noted that what I claim to be Dickens's additions to both these articles, are critical of the Ragged Schools or of people who expected too much of them. In a speech delivered about the same time as his addition to Wills's " Chip," he had urged that sanitation must precede education: " what can a few hours [in a ragged school] effect against the ever-renewed lesson of a whole existence ? "[2] While he continued to urge support for the Schools, he came increasingly to insist on Sanitary Reform, and on the necessity of a State education system with its greater resources of trained staff and compulsory attendance. A few months before his intervention in Morley's article, he had made similar remarks on the inadequacy of good intentions, in his longest Ragged School article, "A Sleep to Startle us." There he urged the Government to make some useful grant to the Ragged Schools, " shackled by no preposterous Red Tape Conditions "—a sum which, by increasing the Schools' effectiveness, would soon repay itself by relieving the prisons. The present teachers, he acknowledges, are

1 *HW*, September 11th, 1852, Vol. V, 597, 602.
2 Speech to Metropolitan Sanitary Association, May 10th, 1851, *Speeches*, edited by R. H. Shepherd, 1884, p. 128. Here, as over several other criticisms, Shaftesbury would agree with him: in 1858 he declared education impossible in insanitary districts: " In home scenes of vice the children unlearn all that is taught in the Ragged Schools " (quoted, J. W. Bready, *Lord Shaftesbury and Social-Industrial Progress*, 1926, p. 112).

devoted to their work, but their usefulness could be " increased fifty-fold " if seconded by " a trained knowledge of the business of instruction, and a sound system adjusted to the peculiar difficulties and conditions of this sphere of action."

The school Dickens had been visiting, and was here describing, was the Field Lane one, which had introduced him to Ragged School work some nine years before. Since then it had acquired better premises and increased its scope, and Dickens noted in his visits in 1850 and now in 1852 a great improvement in its tone and efficiency. He had returned to see its industrial classes, in tailoring and cobbling, and its new Dormitory.[1] He gives a sympathetic account of these activities, and a grim picture of the conditions the Schools sought to alleviate, though he makes some criticisms of details. The multiplication-table was sung " on a principle much too juvenile and innocent for some of the singers "; a pupil-teacher " out of the streets . . . refreshed himself by spitting every half-minute "; the short evening service included " perhaps as inappropriate a prayer as could possibly be read (as though the Lord's Prayer stood in need of it by way of Rider)."[2]

These *Household Words* articles in 1852, "A Sleep " and " Boys to Mend," are the last references to Ragged Schools which I have traced in Dickens's journalism or letters. Probably he lost touch with the movement, though perhaps he continued to visit Schools on behalf of Urania Cottage. The absence of records does not necessarily mean that he was doing nothing; indeed, some of the earlier isolated references crop up rather suddenly and arbitrarily, in such a way as to suggest that his activities were more continuous than the record makes certain. One incident happens to be noted in a lecture given at the end of 1852 by John MacGregor, the organiser of the Ragged School Shoeblack Brigade. He quotes an extract from *The Haunted Man* (a favourite passage, we shall see, in Ragged School circles), but continues:

> The energies of this gifted mind are not limited to the vigorous expression of his opinion; and I rejoice to say that Mr. Dickens is practically interested in our work. He sent lately to one of our Ragged Schools a boy whom he desired to reform, and he requested the managers of that institution to train him for a certain time, and then send him to the Shoeblack Society, promising himself to provide for him a free passage to the Colonies, if his conduct should justify this beneficence.

MacGregor adds that the boy was now working with the Shoeblacks

[1] Erected through the generosity of an anonymous lady who " in the various departments of Ragged School labour, has expended upwards of £600 yearly " (*RSUM*, III, 1851, 126, 152): I suspect this was Miss Coutts. Field Lane, it may be noted, became internationally famous, as both the *doyen* and one of the most enterprising of London Ragged Schools: the Queen subscribed, and Shaftesbury was its perpetual President. Other Schools were sometimes plainly jealous of its prestige, which brought it almost over-ample funds. See an interesting retrospect, " Field Lane: its People—its Dwellings—its Ditch—its Schools," *Ragged School Union Quarterly Record*, II, 1877, 41-59.

[2] *HW*, March 13th, 1852. The *RSUM*, May 1852, reprinted this article, but the Editor silently cut the phrases about the spitter and the prayer, and some Dickensian sallies against Bishops and theological controversialists. Reprinting another *HW* article two months earlier (Morley's account of a Hamburg " Rough House " for ragged children, *HW*, January 17th, 1852), the Editor added a footnote which suggests nicely the difference between the approaches of *HW* and of Exeter Hall: " We have much pleasure in extracting the above account, trusting that the great and only permanent source of good is not lost sight of—*Salvation through a crucified Redeemer* " (*RSUM*, IV, 44). No. I of *Bleak House*, containing the satire on Mrs. Jellyby, appeared in the same month as "A Sleep to Startle Us."

Dormitory of the Field Lane Institute

From *The Ragged School Union Magazine*, Vol., IV, 1852.

and " He works well too; and the others call him ' Smike '."[1] There were other such instances of unrecorded private generosity by Dickens, but in general he seems to have become, by the mid-1850s, increasingly aware of the inadequacy of the Ragged Schools to the huge social problems they faced, and increasingly exasperated by what the Hammonds were later impatiently to describe as " the pious and dutiful twilight of the Ragged Schools." [2] This exasperation appears in some of the articles quoted, and is clearer in, for instance, these letters to Miss Coutts in 1850: " The teachers at these schools," he writes, " though devoted to their uninviting work, are so narrow-minded and odd—and the whole thing (which might be so good) is such a scramble . . ." And of one of the Field Lane teachers, a few weeks later— ". . . she seems to me to be always blowing a shrill set of spiritual Pan's pipes—but she is earnest, though bitterly in want of sound teaching for the office of teacher."[3] People less averse than Dickens to the odour of sanctity made similar complaints. Octavia Hill, for instance, writes of her reactions to a Ragged School meeting in 1856:

> Oh ! to hear how people talk of others, and think they are treating them as Christians ! I'd rather be a table than a Ragged School child. Not an attempt made to show how the teaching influences the children themselves, plenty of statistics about numbers of Bibles given away, etc.[4]

Moreover, Dickens had of course given offence to the pious and philanthropic world by *Bleak House*; Phiz's cover-design for that novel contained one figure wearing a fool's cap and carrying a banner labelled " Exeter Hall," and another holding a scroll inscribed " Humbug." The Ragged School Union a few years later argued convincingly against *The Times* for endorsing " the ' Mrs. Jellyby ' caricature of those evangelicals " who were active both in home and in foreign missions; Shaftesbury, it remarked, was typical of his followers, in that he was President both of the Ragged Schools and of such oversea missions as the British and Foreign Bible Society; the reviled Exeter Hall " May-meeting people " were the main supporters of the Ragged Schools as well as of Borrioboola-Gha ventures.[5] Dickens, indeed, had not put the whole of the truth he knew into *Bleak House*; he was quite aware that pious charity did more for the poor than is suggested by the figures of Mrs. Jellyby, Mrs. Pardiggle and Mr. Chadband.

The satirical over-stated view is of course characteristic of Dickens's fictional technique. His treatment of philanthropists in *Bleak House* is one example; and it is not surprising that his only

[1] *Ragged Schools*, p. 32. Another such anecdote was told by the Revd. C. J. Whitmore to the 1877 Annual Meeting of the R.S.U. Whitmore was worried about the prospects of a maimed boy at his School, whose mother was urging him to steal; prompted by a *HW* article on just such waifs, he invited Dickens to see the boy. Dickens did so, and subsequently found him jobs, first with his printers, and then as a telegraph messenger. This incident probably belongs to 1854 (*RSU Quarterly Record*, II, 1877, 97-8).

[2] J. L. and Barbara Hammond, *Lord Shaftesbury*, 1923, p. 260.

[3] August 23rd and September 13th, 1850, *Coutts Letters*, pp. 173, 176.

[4] *Octavia Hill: Early Ideals*, edited by E. S. Maurice, 1928, p. 28.

[5] *RSUM*, XI, 1859, 42. Five years later, Borrioboola-Gha was still " the worldling's nickname for foreign missions " (*ibid.*, XVI, 1864, 147). One intrepid clergyman, however, admitted to the 1863 Meeting of the R.S.U. that he " worshipped " two men—Palmerston and Dickens; but he was an eccentric who with his next sentence caused a (unique) uproar in the Annual Meeting, by urging others to follow his example, of joining in a dance at a low public-house, in order to gain the confidence of its criminal patrons (*ibid.*, XV, 1863, 140).

fictional Ragged School is presented satirically. This is Charley Hexam's first school, a description of which opens Book II of *Our Mutual Friend* (published in October 1864). One's guess that a Ragged School was here intended is confirmed by the Number-plan: "A ragged School" are the first words of Dickens's notes for this chapter.[1] The whole passage should be re-read. Dickens repeats, with lively exaggeration, his earlier criticisms of Ragged Schools, though without expressing the qualified admiration he had formerly acknowledged (and probably still felt). The best he says of it is that

> Even in this temple of good intentions, an exceptionally sharp boy exceptionally determined to learn, could learn something, and having learned it, could impart it much better than the teachers; as being more knowing than they, and not at the disadvantage in which they stood towards the shrewder pupils.

The rest, which leads up to this sentence, recapitulates the old criticisms and adds a few more. The school was held in "a miserable loft in an unsavoury yard"; it was crowded, noisy and smelly (like Field Lane in 1843). The teachers, "animated solely by good intentions, had no idea of execution, and a lamentable jumble was the upshot of their kind endeavours." The instruction and text-books were "pervaded by a grimly ludicrous pretence that every pupil was childish and innocent"; tough a-moral youngsters off the streets were expected to interest themselves in infantile goody-goody "improving" stories. The adults stumbled over the New Testament, as a reading-primer, thus effectively losing any sense of its sublime inspiration; the infants were on Sunday nights (taken, one remembers, by the voluntary teachers) handed over to "the prosiest and worst of all the teachers with good intentions, whom nobody older could endure." While an older boy dashed round keeping these unfortunate toddlers awake, a wretched hour would pass—

> the exponent drawling on to My Dearerr Childerrenerr, let us say, for example, about the beautiful coming to the Sepulchre; and repeating the word Sepulchre (commonly used among infants) five hundred times, and never once hinting what it meant; . . . the whole hot-bed of flushed and exhausted infants exchanging measles, rashes, whooping-cough, fever, and stomach-disorders, as if they were assembled in High Market for the purpose.

Lucky was Charley Hexam to graduate from this, to a better school, or at least one with different faults, Mr. Bradley Headstone's establishment, "engendered in the light of the latest Gospel according to Monotony."

This vigorous passage does not purport to tell the whole truth about the Ragged Schools, but the criticisms it makes were just (except perhaps for the reference to contagious diseases, in which

[1] Reprinted from the MS. in Ernest Boll's "The Plotting of *Our Mutual Friend*," *Modern Philology*, XLII, 1944, 96-122. This identification of Charley Hexam's School as a Ragged School has not, I think, been noted before. It is puzzling that Dickens should have returned to the subject of Ragged Schools, after a dozen years: but a Ragged School was a plausible establishment for such a boy to start in, and Dickens had decided, as early as 1861, to use the Charley Hexam situation (*Letters*, 3.271). Perhaps his memory had been jogged by the extraordinary Ragged School financial and extension campaigns during the spring and summer of 1864.

Ragged Schools held no monopoly). As Shaftesbury himself acknowledged, on many an occasion, " while [our critics] have been deliberating, we have been acting. We never said our system was a perfect system; we never said it was without faults. We addressed ourselves to the immediate evil; we could not wait."[1] The Union's *Magazine* contains criticisms and suggestions much like Dickens's; for instance, his joke about " Sepulchre " is mild compared with this delightful admonition in " The Teachers' Column "—*Don't Use Dictionary Words*. The writer instances a Ragged School voluntary teacher who asked the children " What is the ostensible design of Sabbath Schools ? "—and another who, having used the word " summary " explained, " I fear, children, I have employed a term you may not readily comprehend. I allude to the word ' summary.' It is synonymous with synopsis " —and a third who rose to address a large mass of children, beginning with due solemnity, " The scene which we now behold is one of unparalleled sublimity " (it soon, the writer commented, " became one of unparalleled restlessness ").[2] Dickens's criticisms of the reading matter used are equally apt, though here " The Teachers' Column " does not echo him. The Union's publication, *Our Children's Magazine*, was rather over-earnestly bent on moral and spiritual instruction, and the most popular Ragged School prizes (except Bibles and primers) were such books as *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *The Dairyman's Daughter* and Samuel Smiles's *Self-Help*. Indeed, to generalise one's remarks at this point, an examination of the records and publications of the Ragged School Union suggests (to me, at least) that Dickens was shrewd and just both in his praise for, and his reservations about, the Ragged School movement.

Dickens was not entirely out of patience with Ragged School efforts by 1864. A few articles on the movement continued to appear, presumably with his concurrence, in *All the Year Round*. His main activities in and for the Schools belong, however, to the period from 1843 to 1852, during which his public support, qualified though it even then was, must have been valuable to the new and developing Ragged School Union. Perhaps his greatest usefulness to the movement was indirect, through the many passages in novels and articles, both before and after 1843, in which he wrote with eloquent indignation about the wretched masses of untaught, unhoused, unfed and uncivilised children on the London streets: such passages as this, about the terrible waif in Chapter III of *The Haunted Man*, which is often reproduced in Ragged School literature:

> There is not a father by whose side in his daily or his nightly walk, these creatures pass; there is not a mother among all the ranks of loving mothers in this land; there is no one risen from the state of childhood, but shall be responsible in his or her degree for this enormity. There is not a country throughout the earth on which it would not be a curse. There is no religion

[1] *RSUM*, XIII, 1861, 143.
[2] *RSUM*, XX, 1868, 66.

on earth that it would not deny; there is no people upon earth it would not put to shame.[1]

Such harangues helped to create a climate of opinion favourable to Ragged School appeals; Dickens, despite his relative lack of interest in the religious aims of the movement, was a valuable ally to its social and moral endeavours. His contribution to, and his difference from, the Ragged Schools, is suggested by the famous encomium of him by their saintly President. Reading the copy of the *Life of Dickens* which Forster sent him, Shaftesbury recorded in his Diary his admiration for this unique, phenomenal figure in English literature; and he continued,

> He was set [*sic: ?sent*], I doubt not, to rouse attention to many evils and many woes; and though not putting it on Christian principles (which would have rendered it unacceptable), he may have been, in God's singular and unfathomable goodness, as much a servant of the Most High as the pagan Naaman, " by whom the Lord had given deliverance to Syria." God gave him, as I wrote to Forster, a general retainer against all suffering and oppression.[2]

[1] This passage, and its context, are quoted by *RSUM*, I, 1849, 29; Alexander M'Neel-Caird, *The Cry of the Children*, 1849, p. 15; Mary Carpenter, *Reformatory Schools*, 1851, p. 59; and by MacGregor, *Ragged Schools*, 1852, p. 31.
[2] Hodder, *Shaftesbury*, 3.298.

THE THEATRICAL TERNANS

By Malcolm Morley

Part V

LAUNCHED on the stage in early childhood, heralded as Infant Phenomena and growing up in the theatrical world; Fanny, Maria and Ellen Ternan were accredited actresses in London of 1858, a year of ceaseless activity for them, certainly for the two younger girls both of whom spent practically every night on the stage before an audience. Fanny, deserting the drama, was shaping her course towards prima-donnaship, studying leading soprano rôles in grand opera. She, more than her sisters, had marked a path for herself in the future. The family was a united one. Mrs. Ternan, proud of the progress made by her daughters, was entitled to regard their triumphs as her own. Time had helped to ease the shock of her husband's tragic death and the girls brought solace to their mother who had virtually retired from the stage. London offers were less than formerly and provincial engagements meant leaving the home she was minding for them all. And with advancing years she felt the fatigue of acting and the discomfort of constant travel.

It was in the spring of 1858 that Dickens commenced his public readings. These were to occupy most of his time for the remainder of the year. Between August 2nd and November 13th, in what might be termed a grand tour, he gave eighty-seven readings in forty-four cities of England, Ireland and Scotland. The interest of appearing before different audiences together with his abundance of nervous energy, sustained him through the ordeal. He admitted to Wilkie Collins " The work is very hard,

sometimes overpowering but I am none the worse for it." Such was the vitality of the man. Whenever possible between public appearances he sped back to Gad's Hill or Tavistock House for brief intervals of rest, if editorial work and a colossal amount of correspondence could be called rest. During those months Dickens

Maria Ternan
copyright photograph

must have found little time for the company of his friends, either of long standing or newly acquired.

Miss Swanborough, from the Haymarket and Olympic, was going into management and had taken the Strand theatre. The Lyceum where Maria was playing, was on the point of closing and the moment seemed opportune to ask the young actress to join the company being assembled for the Strand. Now defunct, this small playhouse, actually in the Strand, was a house that for some years had been given over to broad caricature and mocking satire. Here Henry James Byron launched his first burlesques making fun of contemporary drama, of classics and of stories stored in literature the world over. Nothing was sacred to his pricking pen and verbal quibblings. At this gay little theatre Maria found herself in congenial surroundings. From

April 5th, 1858, she was to act there steadily for a full year, playing burlesque rôles, and occasionally characters in a more serious vein. Her first part was Zerlina in Byron's travesty of the opera *Fra Diavolo*, a riotous affair in which both the libretto of Scribe and the music of Auber were parodied unmercifully. She had a delightful scene where she cavorted in front of a mirror singing of her many charms to the then much-sung melody of " Gentle Zitella." Unaware that the song is a prearranged signal, the all-clear, for brigands to enter the house, Zerlina is surprised by their invasion. There follows an orgy of melodramatic business by W. H. Swanborough as Beppo, all scowls and with a voice hoarse and rumbling. Later in the entertainment, telling of his encounter with her, he copies her actions before the mirror in a wildly extravagant manner as he repeats the song she sang. High jinks and broad fun of this kind, excruciating and outrageous, are well worn stage-fare. Their survival may be noted in some of the patchwork foolery of the Crazy Gang to-day.

With three or four different pieces each evening, changes were constantly being made in the bill at the Strand. On April 26th, Maria played Alice in a revival of *The Country Squire*, a rural comedy by Charles Dance. H. J. Byron parodied the poet Lord Byron in *The Bride of Abydos*, produced on May 31st. Maria was Zobeida, a maid who mimicked her mistress Zuleika in song and dance. (The names of the female characters in the Strand burlesques generally began with a Z.) A dramatisation of Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* on June 12th saw Maria as Sophia, a young lady in a continual state of being rescued by Mr. Burchill, alias Sir William Thornhill. On July 5th she played Lady Valerie in *All that Glitters is not Gold* and, a fortnight later, on the 19th, another Sophia, this one in the farce *Love in all Corners*. Then on July 26th came Casilda in *Asmodeus*, a favourite French adaptation more often known as *The Little Devil*. A new and slight comedy by Charles Selby *The Last of the Pigtails*, staged on September 6th, was mainly a matter of men's clothes. The author as Sir John Starchington represented an old beau, who, after much persuasion, cuts off his pigtail and exchanges his nankeen for an up-to-date suit of black. Maria was Mrs. Swellington, a wife claiming that her vulgar husband dressed himself as a gent and not as a gentleman. Sartorial niceties dotted the dialogue. On the 13th Maria acted Travers in *Nothing to Nurse* and on the 20th Miss Bland in *I'll write to the Times*. The first performance of *My Aunt's Husband*, by Selby, on September 27th gave her the rôle of Kitty Crinoline, a plotting and resourceful servant maid.

Ellen, like Maria, was busy in the theatre throughout 1858. She acted steadily at the Haymarket until the season ended in July when, without respite, Buckstone took the entire company to Manchester. It was the first occasion that an organisation from a London theatre had been so transplanted, meaning the complete set up, plays and players, without any change in personnel. A unique event at the time though later it developed into the commonplace. From July 12th until August 28th the Theatre Royal, Manchester, housed the Haymarket productions beginning with *The School for Scandal* in which, as before, Ellen played Maria.

Other parts followed; a number of them aptly described in playhouse parlance as " walking ladies." They walked on, graced the stage with their presence, spoke a few lines and walked off—to walk on again when the time arrived for the final curtain and all characters lined up for the applause of the audience. But on August 20th came a part that was new to Ellen. It was a plum—Lydia Languish in *The Rivals.* The nights she played Lydia she was the leading lady; yet it gave her no sense of achievement. She was a substitute for another actress, one she could not hope to equal. The next day the critic of the *Manchester Guardian* wrote: " The comedy was completely successful, as far as the hearty enjoyment of the audience was concerned, although Miss E. Ternan being the Lydia there were the strongest reasons for regretting the continued indisposition of Miss Amy Sedgwick."

Ellen's other new characters whilst in the northern city were Emily in the farce of *Grimshaw, Bagshaw and Bradshaw* and Zamora in John Tobin's verse comedy, *The Honeymoon.* The latter was a young lady who, in true Elizabethan fashion, wandered through the play in the guise of a boy, thereby deceiving all and sundry as to her sex. The Manchester visit over, the players returned to London where after a week of rehearsals they were acting at a Haymarket freed from painters and upholsterers. The season began on September 6th and one of the pieces on the bill was *A Wicked Wife* by John Courtney in which Ellen had a barely noticeable rôle as Hilarine.

Mrs. Ternan and the girls had been living at Park Cottage, Northampton Park, Canonbury. A move was made to 31 Berners Street, a place not far distant from the theatres where Maria and Ellen were acting, when it was decided that Fanny was to go to Florence to study singing under Romani. A determined young woman she had weakened at the thought of going there alone, of meeting new faces and being in a strange country by herself. Her mother, solicitous of her well-being, decided to go with her and see that she was comfortably bestowed in the new environment, one that would presumably be very different from that to which she was accustomed. After many farewells to the others, Mrs. Ternan and Fanny set out for Italy. Maria and Ellen were left on their own in the Berners Street rooms. But the fact of two young girls living alone in the centre of London, on the fringe of the West End, was not like their living alone in one of the respectable suburbs fringing the city. They were close to the haunts of the roving male. Perforce the girls had to be out late at night, at the hour when the predatory reveller looked for gay companionship. An inquisitive policeman took it upon himself to question them about their habitation, their ways and means. They naturally resented the man's behaviour and implications. Dickens was told and, as a friend of the family, he accepted the challenge, determined that an end should be made to this annoyance. His suspicion was that the policeman had been suborned to find out all about their domesticity by some " swell." An indignant Dickens wanted the officer's conduct investigated. Busy with his readings, travelling up and down the country, he wrote to W. H. Wills asking him to report the matter to Yardley of Scotland

Yard. In the letter he said " The young ladies were most irreproachable in themselves and most respectable in all ways." He besought Wills to call and see Maria and Ellen and get particulars. We may be sure that Wills, his trusted lieutenant and sub-editor of *Household Words*, carried out instructions. No doubt, the policeman was reprimanded and the girls relieved of his interference with their comings and goings in Berners Street. Mrs. Ternan returned from abroad in due course, and, at everybody's wish, new quarters were sought. The family moved to 2 Houghton Place, Amphill Square, a mile farther north—away from the range of swells on pleasure bent in Victorian London.

Fanny had a feeling of loneliness after her mother had left Florence. The separation of two years was to be the longest time they had ever been apart. She turned to the reason for being there, to study with Pietro Romani. She liked her singing master and he found her amenable to his teaching—and Romani was a strict teacher. The spell of romantic and historic Florence soon cast itself over her. Through the introduction of Dickens she had met Mrs. Trollope and her eldest son Tom, a meeting that was to have no small influence on coming events. The friendship of the Trollopes gave Fanny entrée to the social and literary life surging round the magnificent villa where aged Mrs. Trollope lived with Tom, his wife Theodosia and their young daughter, to say nothing of the long term guests, of whom there were many. The villa, more like a Palace, had become known as the Villa Trollopino. It housed not only the Italian Trollopes, as they were called to distinguish them from the family of Anthony in England, but Tom's library of fourteen thousand books, mostly rare and valuable works on Italian art and history. Thomas Adolphus Trollope was a historian; his younger and more famous brother, like their mother, was a novelist.

Mrs. Trollope (she was another Frances Eleanor) had written her last book before Fanny arrived in Florence. Her powers were gradually fading, if not her caustic tongue, Spiritualism dominated the life of the old lady who was forever seeking manifestations of the metaphysical, hoping to establish contact with her dead children. To penetrate the veil, the curtain between life and death, was an obsession with her. She sat at the feet of Daniel Home, the notorious medium of the 1850's and 1860's, to whom a guest room was given at the Villa Trollopino for a month. During his stay the evenings were devoted to spirit rapping, table turning and groping for messages from the departed.

Fanny soon found a companion and friend in Theodosia. Music brought them together; the one sang and the other played. They both found pleasure in poetry and in reading verse aloud. Much of it was in Italian and Fanny applied herself to learning the language. With her quick intelligence and absorbant memory she soon gathered enough knowledge of Italian to translate poems into English. Another interest for Fanny was a young admirer, Beatrice, the daughter of Tom and Theodosia. This shy and hesitant child of five showed so much joy in her company that she, in turn, became greatly attached to the delicate little girl.

Let us leave Fanny with her operatic studies and friendships

in Florence and come back to her sisters in London. Maria at the Strand went gaily from burlesque to burlesque. In the autumn of 1858 Marie Wilton was to join the company there. This joyous little comedienne, popular in farcical fare, was later to develop into a serious actress. That was after she and her husband, Sydney Bancroft, had taken over the neglected Queen's Theatre, derisively known as " The Dusthole " and converted it into the fashionable Prince of Wales's where they were to produce the best work of the successful dramatist, T. W. Robertson. The Scala Theatre now stands on the site.

Marie Wilton with Patty Oliver and Maria Ternan made a merry threesome in Byron's travesty *The Maid and the Magpie* when it was produced on October 11th, 1858. The piece was an enormous attraction and all London flocked to the Strand. Dickens, back from his series of Readings, went to the theatre primarily to see Maria and, perhaps, the occasion was the first time he saw Marie Wilton on the stage. A responsive playgoer, he became enthusiastic about her. He wrote to John Forster urging him to go and see Miss Wilton's clever performance of the boy Pippo and added that the Strand was always crowded. Pippo in the burlesque was a strage struck young man who spent more time indulging in histrionics and demonstrating various forms of contemporary entertainment, from heavy tragedy to negro minstrelsy, than in attending to his duties at the Inn where he served. Maria had the rôle of Gianetto and was described on the playbill as " a Pattern Soldier of a Fast Colour, who, despising his farmer Father's calling, objects to sowing anything save his wild oats." Patty Oliver was Ninette, the Maid accused of stealing a spoon, one that had actually been carried off by the thieving magpie. Presumably Forster found his way to the Strand and relaxed sufficiently to enjoy *The Maid and the Magpie* if, indeed, he ever relaxed.

In a new comedietta *The Rule of Three* by Frank Talfourd on December 20th, Maria played Mrs. Thistleburr, a smugly married wife pestered by three persistent wooers. These she routs one after the other with her battery of feminine resource. The Christmas burlesque of 1858 was *Kenilworth* by Andrew Halliday and Frederick Laurence. No reverence was shown to the story taken from Walter Scott's novel; it was served on a platter laden with puns and topical allusions. Marie Wilton played the persecuted Amy Robsart. When it was planned that she should fall through a trap door into the depths below, she was saved by her voluminous crinoline overlapping the hole. Miss Swanborough swaggered manfully as the Earl of Leicester, but gave up the part on January 10th to Maria who swaggered with somewhat more grace than the manageress. They would both have been in the " principal boy " category to-day.

Whatever her part and however grotesque the situations, Maria always retained a measure of dignity. In *On and Off the Stage* by Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, published some years later, Marie Wilton (that was) devoted a chapter to the Strand and spoke of Miss Ternan as a very refined actress. This meant that she had none of the vulgarity often found in burlesque performances and

not that she was refined in the strictly suburban sense. Maria's next part at the theatre was Mrs. Witchington on February 17th in *Wooing in Jest*, by A. C. Troughton. On March 24th, a new farce also by Troughton was produced, *Vandyke Brown*, an affair entirely of mistaken identities, in which she enacted Mrs. Bobbins. Her engagement with Miss Swanborough was to end on April 16th and from that happy little playhouse she went to the Haymarket where her younger sister Ellen was one of the company.

One of the company; Ellen could not claim a higher status. She was decorative, had a pleasant voice and spoke lines intelligently, but she never gave herself entirely to the part she was playing. Her temperament was little suited to the theatre; she would prefer to live her life away from footlights. Following the opening of the season at the Haymarket she had repeated the rôle of Emily in *Grimshaw, Bagshaw and Bradshaw* on September 24th, 1858, and on November 6th, when Charles Mathews was fulfilling one of his starring engagements, had been cast for Adele in the first performance of *A Tale of a Coat* by William Brough and Dr. Franck, a piece mainly concerned with the efforts of a blundering busybody to retrieve a coat containing certain secret despatches of a diplomatic nature. Adele looked on. *Used Up*, familiar vehicle for Mathews, was given on November 18th with Ellen as Mary, yet another onlooker. The same evening she appeared as Flora in *My Mother's Maid*, an adaptation by Mathews of a Labiche farce, *Edgard et sa Bonne*. On December 13th Ellen played Alice in Bayle Bernard's *The Tide of Time*, a heavy going comedy based on social conflict, its purport being the difference in manners and methods of poor aristocrat and wealthy commoner.

The Haymarket entered 1859, the last year that Ellen was to be " one of the company." Memories of her childhood must have been recalled when *The Soldier's Daughter* was revived there. At the age of eight, in Dublin and other places, she had enacted Julia, the doll-loving infant, in this old comedy. Her mother had been the warm-hearted Widow Cheerly, one of her favourite characters. On January 29th, Ellen was seen for the first time in London as Zamora in *The Honeymoon*. In *The Young Mother*, a new play by Charles Selby on February 28th, she gave, what was termed, a well-conceived performance of Angelina Melrose, a governess in narrow circumstances. Harry Oakheart, a cabinet maker, played by Buckstone, tries to help Angelina by giving her a cabinet in which he has surreptitiously placed a money box to add to her small savings. A contemporary notice described Ellen as petite and pretty.

Amy Sedgwick, one of the stars visiting the Haymarket regularly had a customary Benefit on March 12th and took the opportunity of trying out *The World and the Stage* taken from the French of *Les Princesses de la Rampe*, by J. Palgrave Simpson. In this novelish comedy she and Ellen played two sisters; one an actress, Kate Robertson, and the other Lady Castlecrag, shallow and unprincipled. The latter, represented by Ellen, was an all-important character in the play. Without thought of her husband she becomes entangled in a net of matrimonial deceit. Debts pile up and she is threatened with ruin. Where can she turn ? Kate,

good soul, despised socially because she is an actress, is there to save the tarnished reputation of her titled sister and banish all her money difficulties. *The World and the Stage* was only given for the one performance. Amy Sedgwick had to leave the Haymarket to fulfil provincial engagements but it was arranged for her to

Ellen Ternan

copyright photograph

return at Easter when the piece would be staged for a run. Meanwhile Charles Mathews came back to the theatre for a number of revivals. In *A Game of Speculation*, from Balzac's *Mercadet*, on March 28th he had one of his best parts as Mr. Affable Hawk whilst Ellen, as his daughter Julia, had a rôle more suited to her youth and gentleness than the hard and self-indulgent Lady Castlecrag.

On Easter Monday, April 25th, *The World and the Stage* was again in the bill, the cast the same as before—with one exception. Lady Castlecrag was not played by Ellen Ternan but by Mrs. Buckingham White. However unsuited and seemingly apathetic Ellen may have been, the fact of her being replaced by another actress must have been hurtful. It was an indication that the

stage had few rewards for her. Not that she had set her heart upon them but she wanted to get away from the dreary walking ladies she was for ever rehearsing and performing. Her normal bright nature was dulled by their monotonous attendance in play after play, a gallery of ghosts, and having, in herself, to attempt the task of giving life to these lifeless ladies. The other item on the bill that Easter Monday was an extravaganza by Frank Talfourd, *Electra in a new Electric Light*, in which Ellen had no part. Maria, now attached to the Haymarket, donned the trappings of travesty as Orestes. The classic Greek tragedy was made the starting point for the broadcast humour and she, with her flow of vitality, frolicked through the author's satirical nonsense, the songs, the concerted numbers and a strenuous wrestling match introduced into the action.

For the next three or four months both Maria and Ellen were occupied at the Haymarket. Maria was seen as Fanny Sparkes in *The Water Witches*, on June 16th; as Matilda in *Married for Money*, on July 11th, and as Emily Snowden in *How to make Home Happy*, on July 16th. Ellen continued to repeat her bits in the farces, although some of the bits she had previously played were now being given to others. Her position in the theatre was less than ever before. Had it come to the parting of the ways? On August 4th she was billed as Mrs. Gatherwool in *Out of Sight, out of Mind*, a comedy by Charles Mathews who played Mr. Gatherwool, an individual without a memory. Instead of kissing his wife goodbye, he kisses the maid, and, instead of ejecting an unwelcome lover of Mrs. Gatherwool, he turns one of his best friends out of the house. On August 10th Ellen played at the Haymarket for the last time. The following evening her part of Mrs. Gatherwool was taken over by Maria.

Ellen Ternan never acted again on the professional stage. More and more had her distaste for theatrical life grown until at last the one thing before her was to renounce it altogether. Since the age of three she had been before the public; she was twenty when she left the scene. The only kindred employment that was to occupy her mind in the future was the teaching of elocution and, to use a current term, giving instruction in the dramatic poets.

To be continued

DICKENS ON THE STAGE

A CHRISTMAS CAROL. A free adaptation by Joan Littlewood, was produced by Theatre workshop at Theatre Royal, Stratford, London, E., on December 16th.

PICKWICK PAPERS. A free adaptation by Stanley Young, was produced at the Nottingham Playhouse on February 2nd.

DICKENS BIRTHDAY DINNER AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

ON Saturday, February 7th, the Dickens Fellowship celebrated the 147th Anniversary of the birth of Dickens in the Members' Dining Room of the House of Commons, by the great kindness of Mr. Kenneth Robinson, M.P. The significance of the occasion was commented upon by Mr. Robinson in his speech, as will be seen below, and the President, the Dean of St. Paul's, voiced our thanks to him for this great privilege. The beautiful room was filled to capacity with a company numbering nearly two hundred. We quote below from some of the speeches.

THE EARL OF LYTTON:

There is something about Dickens which reveals the truth—not only the foibles of one's neighbours, which are always enjoyable, but the secret fastnesses in one's heart, which are more disturbing.

I want to start with the details of some of the things which have touched me in a way that throws a light on the whole of his work. The way in which, for example, he provides a character for everything he touches, whether it is animal or vegetable or mineral. Do you remember the kind of character which he describes as belonging to Crummles's pony, the pony which was good at bottom, but which was not so good at top, as it had excessively long hair? Driving along, Mr. Crummles was describing the ancestry of his steed, which was pulling the carriage, and how his father was of rather low origin; and after some considerable time of drinking port wine with the clown, it bit through the bowl of the receptacle and choked itself, thus showing its inherent vulgarity. I am very fond of horses and I feel that Dickens gives a character to Crummles's pony which makes it unique.

There is another matter, moving to vegetable. You remember the susceptible and aging Mrs. Nickleby, who was walking by her garden wall and the sky presently darkened by various vegetables, large and small, which descended before her; and these were propelled from the other side of the wall by an admirer. It is true he was wandering in his mind, but Mrs. Nickleby, at a susceptible age, was moved by these articles, which fell at her feet. It seems to me a delightful description of the relatively idiotic things which form the means of communication between people who are infatuated with one another.

Then, of course, mineral—the bellows, the rusty old bellows which Mr. Newman Noggs seized and waved over the head of Mr. Squeers, making many gesticulations before eventually bringing it down crash on the head of Mr. Squeers.

It does not matter what Dickens touches—whether it is animate or inanimate—he gives it an individual character. You remember its individuality for ever afterwards. I can't see a bellows, without

feeling I should like to wave it in the air and crash it down on somebody's head.

Coming to more serious matters, Dickens provides admirable portraits of all sorts of sinners. Sin, malefaction—whatever you call it—has had a raw deal for many decades past. It has virtually been abolished by a number of people, and my opinion is fostered by no less a person than Lord Goddard, who was, until recently, Lord Chief Justice of this country. Before he retired, Lord Goddard said that one of the troubles in these days with the malefactor was that he was regarded as an invalid. There are the prophets who have virtually now abolished this notion of sin—sin itself—people like Bernard Shaw, prince of dramatists possibly, but not, in my opinion, so great a prophet, whose verdict was that ignorance was the cause. Get rid of ignorance, you can get rid of sin, rid of all error. People do rightly if ignorance is abolished. To Keir Hardie, it was poverty that was the root of all crime and evil.

Now let me take a few selected sinners from the pages of Charles Dickens. I could have produced a regiment of them.

Let me take as the first example a lady, Mrs. Jellyby. This is what Mrs. Jellyby had to say: " The African project at present employs my whole time. It involves me in correspondence with public bodies and with private individuals, anxious for the welfare of their species all over the country. I am happy to say it is advancing. We hope, by this time next year, to have from 150 to 200 healthy families cultivating coffee and educating the natives of Borrioboola-Gha, on the left bank of the Niger."

That is the kind of improvement in which I have had a hand, because less than thirty years ago I was despatched to educate and bring the ideas of modern criminal law to those who then also lived on the left bank of the Niger. I was instructed by my authorities to explain the virtues of executing murderers and of putting other serious malefactors in prison. But I see expounded in yesterday's paper, or to-day's paper, the idea that malefactors should work to maintain their dependents, and that is what those Africans always did, before I told them not to. The argument they used was—if you execute this man, not only have his dependents to be looked after by us, but the dependents of his victim, too, because he has killed the bread-winner. Therefore, the right thing is to make him work for the remainder of his life to maintain his family and his victim's family.

There is another lady, whose sin is of a different order. Mrs. Pardiggle carried her children about—evidently with utmost unwillingness on the part of the children—wherever she went. " They attend Matins with me," she said, "at six-thirty in the morning all the year round, and they are with me during my duties of the day. I am a School Lady, I am a Visiting Lady, I am a Reading Lady, I am a Distributing Lady. I am on the local Linen Box Committee and many general Committees. They are my companions everywhere, and by these means they acquire that knowledge of the poor, and that capacity of doing charitable business in general, in short, that taste for that sort of thing,

which will render them, in after life, a service to their neighbours and a satisfaction to themselves."

You must at least be in sympathy with all these people with their various foibles, otherwise you would not be here. Therefore I feel I can tell you of a matter in which I failed in a similar manner to Mrs. Pardiggle.

Some years ago, I used to go to a Club in the East End of London, and I did much the same sort of thing as Mrs. Pardiggle. Had I only read about Mrs. Pardiggle before, I should have done it so much better—or less badly, anyway.

Here is a very choice example of the sense of aristocracy—Sir Leicester Dedlock. This is the description of the gentleman: " Sir Leicester receives the gout as a troublesome demon, but still a demon of the patrician order. All the Dedlocks in the direct male line, through a course of time during and beyond which the memory of man goeth not to the contrary, have had the gout. It can be proved, sir. Other men's fathers may have died of rheumatism, but the Dedlock family have communicated something exclusive, even to the levelling process of dying, by dying of their own family gout." Now, it is not gout one suffers from, but arthritis. We all have our foibles.

I have just one other.

This is what Dickens says: " No warmth could warm; no wintry weather chill him. No wind that blew was bitterer than he. No falling snow was more intent upon its purpose; no pelting rain less open to entreaty," introducing our old friend Scrooge. Scrooge is described in a manner which convinces one that he is the meanest of the mean. When I say to you " Scrooge," I am talking about a Scrooge, an example of repulsive meanness—overwhelmingly a mean fellow. He really cannot be allowed to repent.

I am not convinced that those phantoms could have had any effect on a man like Scrooge. That people don't change once they are fifty, is, I think, very largely true, and I resent the way in which Scrooge is allowed to repent. He is taken along by the Spirit of Christmas Yet to Come and he is shown what sort of man he is. He declares that he is not the man he was, that he will change. I say to myself: " No; this is not so. You have done nothing to deserve it. There is no indication that you have done anything to deserve it. Scrooge cannot be *allowed* to repent."

THE PRESIDENT:

It is high time that I ceased to be President of this Society, because I am very conscious that I have fallen lamentably behind in the progress of research and knowledge of our great hero, the man whom we are here to commemorate and to honour. It is astonishing how many books have poured out from the press lately about Charles Dickens—I think more from the American press than from the English press.

When I confess that I have read only a few of these, and I realise that it is not possible for a President of your Society, who has any other occupation in life, really to keep abreast of the

subject he is supposed to know something about, I am well content that I am to be succeeded, I understand, by a lady who has not only youth on her side and energy, but—I understand and can well believe—an almost unrivalled capacity for assimilating new knowledge. To paraphrase Bernard Shaw, when he left off writing dramatic criticism: " I step down and now enters the incomparable " Margaret.

I thought I might say a word or two about one aspect of Dickens—Dickens the story-teller. I think it is very important not to lose sight of the fact that is what he primarily is. That is the reason why he is read as widely as he is. There is great danger from having so many interpreters. Shakespeare, for example, is submerged under his interpreters, and I would venture to say that most people read far more about Shakespeare than they read Shakespeare. May the time never arrive when people read more about Dickens than they read Dickens himself. Therefore it is very important to keep a firm hold of the fact that whatever competence Dickens may have as a philosopher or sociologist or psychologist, he was a master at telling a story. And I distinguish between a story-teller and a novelist. I think that is an important distinction.

Dickens was incapable of writing a dead sentence. There are hardly any defective metaphors in his writing. He is always writing with his imagination alight, and not with the mechanical reproduction of worn-out similes, and modes of speech; and that is something for which we owe a great debt, which will always make him worth reading.

One of the things that I have heard complained of about Dickens is that his heroes or heroines are so colourless—and it is true. David Copperfield is not a striking individual; and yet I believe his very colourlessness (if that is the right word) is one of the reasons why we find him and other Dickensian heroes so absorbing. One of the defects, in my view, of so much modern novel writing—very clever and accomplished as much of it is—is that it is so difficult to identify oneself with any of the characters in the book. For my part, after reading a current novel, at the end I think it would be rather a good idea if all these people were wiped from the face of the earth. I really don't care what becomes of them at all. But in Dickens's novels, colourless persons like David Copperfield, cause us to think: " Here's quite a good fellow, not with any special ability, but means well and goes through life and is buffeted by circumstances and comes up against all kinds of people who make themselves nuisances to him. He's got a pretty difficult journey to go. And, unconsciously, we put ourselves in his place. I think of myself as just an ordinary, well-meaning chap, who struggles along as best he can through life and meets all kinds of obstacles—just like David Copperfield. And, unconsciously, I identify myself with him. In the novels of Charles Dickens, we do care what is going to happen, not only to the central figure, but to all those who are associated with him.

In conclusion, I would like to say, as President, how deeply grateful we are to Mr. Kenneth Robinson, Member of Parliament,

for inviting the Fellowship to the House of Commons. It is thrilling to be within these walls; it is the nearest some of us get to the seats of the mighty. We are deeply grateful we have been able to have a memorable dinner in this memorable place.

THE RT. HON. KENNETH ROBINSON, M.P.:

There used to be a rule in this place—never taken very seriously, but nevertheless an unwritten rule—that when functions of this kind were held in the precincts of the Palace of Westminster, they had to be those of bodies which have some association with Parliament. The rule has long since been abolished, but it is a fact that this function to-night would have qualified under the most strict interpretation of that rule. I recall that at the age of 19 or 20—many years even before Boz—Charles Dickens was a reporter of parliamentary speeches for the *Mirror of Parliament*, which was a kind of Hansard of his day. What's more, he was a very good reporter. He was about the best of the lot, about eighty or ninety of them. He was very accurate and very fast. I am sorry to say he did not form a very high opinion of Parliament, and indeed, rather disliked it as an institution. We are told that Dickens saw the House as a place of protracted talk, archaic rules, red tape and sealing wax, and the defender of the privileged interest. No doubt, it must have coloured his view and led to the Eatanswill Election.

But he worked very hard in Parliament. He worked in three-quarter-hour shifts, which was very much longer than reporters work to-day.

It is my honour and privilege to propose the toast of the Dickens Fellowship. The Fellowship is 56 years old, I think. It has a very good name; fellowship is the right kind of word for a society of this sort. It is flourishing and I don't really need to remind you of its achievements. It has sixty branches, more than half of them overseas. Not only has it acquired the Dickens House, Doughty Street, and endowed it as a museum, but it is also engaged in much very useful charitable work.

In this catalogue of successes, there was one recent failure. The Fellowship tried very hard to save No. 1 Devonshire Terrace, the house where Dickens lived for so many happy years and wrote *David Copperfield* and four or five other masterpieces. When this very pleasant, very charming building was threatened, the Fellowship got to work stirring up public opinion and did a very fine job indeed. They fought very hard, but now that very pleasant building is just a nasty hole in the ground.

But I do not want to end on a note of failure, so I ask you to remember the remarkable success of the Dickens Fellowship and look forward to the next 56 years of activity.

Mr. T. S. Blakeney replied.

The Health of the Chairman was proposed by Mr. Eric Dickens Hawkesley and the President responded.

Mr. John Greaves gave selections from Dickens during the evening.

HAIL COLUMBIA!

By John Greaves
(*Hon. Secretary of the Dickens Fellowship*)

"MR. SAMUEL PICKWICK burst like a sun from his slumbers, threw open his chamber window, and looked out upon the world beneath. Goswell Street was at his feet, Goswell Street was on his right hand—as far as the eye could reach, Goswell Street extended on his left; and the opposite side of Goswell Street was over the way . . . 'As well might I be content,' thought Mr. Pickwick, 'to gaze on Goswell Street for ever, without one effort to penetrate to the hidden countries which on every side surround it.'"

Those were just my thoughts, as I approached my retirement from business. In May last year, therefore, when I finally laid down my office pen, arrangements were completed for my tour of the United States and Canada –a tour undertaken, according to our President, the Dean of St. Paul's, "to increase an interest in the writings of Charles Dickens, and to make the Fellowship better known."

I was naturally anxious to see as many branches of the Fellowship, in the New World, as I could, having visited all those in this country. It soon became quite apparent that there was little need to increase an interest in Dickens, over there, because of the great enthusiasm for his works already widespread. All I had to do, indeed, was to enjoy Dickens with our friends across the sea, which I did with a good will.

On the course of my round journey of some 15,000 miles from New York, seven thousand of which I did by car, I spoke at Universities, Colleges, High Schools, English Speaking Unions, Libraries and Clubs. Everywhere, from my youngest audience, in the fifteen-year-old age class, up to the "slightly older" members of the Fellowship, the enthusiasm with which Dickens was received, was at times overwhelming.

Dickens is news in America and nearly everywhere I was interviewed by the Press, photographed, appeared a number of times on television and radio and made film recordings including two thirty minute films of my recitals, which are intended for distribution, not only throughout America, but all over the English-speaking world. It was a most heartening, encouraging and thrilling experience and I felt greatly privileged to have been a Dickens ambassador for England.

I can hardly hope to give anything but a very sketchy outline of my journey and varied experiences, from a sight-seeing point of view, without taking up a complete issue of *The Dickensian*. America is a country of astonishing contrasts, of beauty and ugliness, of impressive solitudes and noisy crowds, typified, perhaps in the raucous voice of its blue jay, contrasting with its elegant plumage of dazzling blue.

The noise and confusion of New York, after seven days tossing on the Atlantic, where buses snort derisively and subways make conversation impossible, was most effectively counteracted by the warm hospitality of its citizens, in particular, of the New York Branch Secretary, who gave us a most kindly welcome. Her fascinating collection of Dickens and his contemporaries proved

a strong competitor to the fairyland view from her windows of the skyline of New York, by night, across the river, the like of which I have never seen before.

Journeying on to Boston, a whirl of hospitality almost overwhelmed us, in the unforgettable surroundings of the autumn foliage of the New England countryside. The thrill of lunching, with fellow members of the Boston Branch, in the Dickens Room of the Parker House Hotel, where Dickens stayed and sitting around the famous " Walking Match Table," where he dined with Dolby and his friends, vied with visits to Harvard University, Lexington, Concord, the Craigie (Longfellow) House and many other places, interspersed with calls at colourful roadside " Pumpkin Markets."

A brief visit to Chicago and an opportunity to enjoy lunch, kindly given by members of the Fellowship Committee, and we were off again on our journey west. We arrived at the fabulous Los Angeles, after several days and nights, in a train, the last thing in luxury: with lounges, bars, smoking rooms and three observation domes, from which the desert and glorious canyons through the mountains, could be viewed in comfort. A vicious little sandstorm, picking itself out of a desert roadway, as we passed, and spinning along to some unknown destination—a fleeting and unusual glimpse of a herd of antelope—every moment of the journey brought something astonishing, to say nothing of one boiled egg in the train restaurant, for two dollars ! (The dollar at about 7/6.)

Thanks to our hosts in Del Mar, two members of the Fellowship H.Q., we were able to enjoy a delightful car journey of many thousands of miles along the lovely Pacific Coast, through majestic redwoods, Nature's cathedrals, the unforgettable Yosemite National Park, Vancouver, Victoria, with breaks on the way to speak at universities and colleges. Orange and lemon groves, avocado orchards, ancient missions, fields of cotton, majestic snow-capped mountain peaks, deep river gorges, a forest fire at night, a mild tornado, and an earthquake were all included in our varied itinerary. The U.S.A. certainly spared itself nothing to provide variety !

Fellowship Branches were visited at Seattle, Vancouver and Victoria, and everywhere our fellow members gave us a warm and kindly welcome—a welcome we shall remember, long after many of our other memories have faded into obscurity. Visits to American and Canadian homes made our visit even more enjoyable.

At San Francisco on Election Night, a specially requested " Eatanswill Election " programme was given for the English Speaking Union. Posters were displayed, bearing the caption " VOTE FOR GREAVES," and the general verdict of the meeting was that there had been little change in the election tactics since the great contest between the Blues and the Buffs.

Here, too, a combined meeting of the San Francisco Bay Branches, was organised by the genial secretary and founder of the Oakland St. Alberts College Branch. His kindly introduction would have warmed the heart of any Dickensian and certainly inspired me to give of my best.

Following many other appearances, we returned south to Los Angeles, where under the auspices of the Palos Verdes Branch, a very energetic and enthusiastic member, who was first to welcome us on arrival in the West, organised a luncheon of the Los Angeles Branches and the Sierra Madre Branch. Here, as everywhere, the spirit of the Fellowship was manifest, and wonderful hospitality was enjoyed by your Secretary and his wife.

A few days later, the California Pickwick Club, some of whose members had been present at the Los Angeles luncheon, organised a further meeting, under the guidance of its very enthusiastic secretary, who has been kind enough to express publicly that my efforts in America have contributed towards better Anglo-American relations—a statement of which I am naturally very proud.

In lecturing to the universities, colleges and schools, the method usually employed was to speak to combined meetings of several classes of students, then to a voluntary General Assembly, where often anything from 700 to 1,000 students packed the auditoriums. Sometimes I spoke to Faculty members at luncheons and again at dinner, speaking three or even four times a day.

The response to the humour and drama of Dickens and particularly to examples of his great descriptive powers and creation of characters was electric and often took me completely by surprise. At one library, so many people attended my lecture on *Great Expectations* that many were turned away. Others stood several deep at the back of the hall, packed the passages beyond and at the side and even squatted on the platform at my feet during the one-and-a-half-hours recital —an experience I shall long remember with a great thrill.

From temperatures of 101° in California, where I was endeavouring, towards the end of my stay to evoke the spirit of Christmas, in brilliant sunshine, a second flying visit was paid to Chicago, where snow and ice prevailed and temperatures hovered around zero. The small town of Oswego set us shivering with reports of temperatures 36° below and 88 inches of snow ! Here in Chicago, the unfailing hospitality of the Fellowship was again enjoyed and I spoke to branch members whose warm welcome more than made amends for the icy weather.

At Toronto, Canada, the story was the same—the weather was worse, but the kindly welcome of the Fellowship made me regret that I could not extend my visit to yet another of our Canadian branches in Montreal.

The sight of Niagara Falls in the grip of winter, with fantastic icicles hanging everywhere—where lamp-posts had turned into fairy trees and railings into blankets of solid ice, was unforgettable. Everything that Dickens said about it was true and is still. The grandeur of that great green liquid wall, plunging into a cauldron of foam and rising like a white ghost into the air, surely cannot be surpassed. Commercialism was hibernating and Nature reigned supreme !

The next stop was Philadelphia in the noisiest train I experienced. I think they took it to pieces during the night and reassembled it for amusement. At Philadelphia, in addition to the

usual welcome we were beginning to know, I think I experienced one of the most impressive experiences of the tour. In both the Rosenbach Foundation and the Free City Library, thanks to Mr. William McCarthy of the former and Miss Ellen Shaffer of the latter, and at Sesslers, under the kindly guidance of Miss Mabel Zahn, I was privileged, not only to see the most wonderful Dickens collection of letters, manuscripts, presentation editions and personal relics, but was left to handle them as I would.

With what sad thoughts one reverently handles the original copy of *Pickwick Papers*, presented by Dickens to Mary Hogarth! The first fourteen monthly parts bear, in his handwriting, the inscription, with sundry variations: "To Mary Hogarth. From her's most affectionately C.D." How proud this young author must have been to add that inscription. The fifteenth number bears the name "George Hogarth" only—his young daughter having died since publication of the previous number.

A photograph on a cabinet in the Library of a familiar figure—our worthy Hon. Editor—"gloating" over the same treasure turned my thoughts to home and reminded me that my tour was fast approaching its end. I feel sure that our Editor will agree that, sorry as we are to see these great literary treasures go out of the country, it is with a feeling of deep gratitude and relief that we find them being shown to the best advantage, yet every care being taken of them. The owners of these treasures, be they private persons or cities, are truly proud of these priceless possessions. Those were my feelings as I enjoyed the privilege of seeing these things and I am grateful indeed to Philadelphia for making it possible.

My kindly hosts greeted us with a huge decorated Christmas tree in their front garden, lighted for our special reception at 6-40 a.m., the time of our arrival. Fellowship could never hope for a more kindly reception, so many miles away from home. After yet another enthusiastic reception at Philadelphia, we journeyed north again to speak for the last time in the States, at Boston. Here the time flew by all too quickly in making film records of my recitals, besides enjoying Christmas with good friends across the sea in Providence.

Sailing day came all too quickly, but with warming thoughts of home and enjoying Dickens once more with my fellow members in England.

It has been a great experience meeting our Overseas members and making so many new friends and I would like to take this opportunity of expressing the great appreciation of myself and my wife for all the heart-warming hospitality and kindness shown to us. I shall look forward to renewing my acquaintance with many of these new-found friends when I return to the States early in 1960 to fulfil a second tour for which a number of dates have already been fixed.

The message I have learnt after over 20,000 miles of travel is that Dickens is news across the seas and we can with profit make more of him in England than we do and realise more what a great heritage we have in him and his wonderful writings.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP

The Editor would appreciate the receipt of advance copies (in typescript if need be) of the Autumn programme of European and North American branches, by the 1st August in order that as full a Diary of Meetings as possible may be presented in the September Number. Australasian branches are asked to provide such advance copies, by air mail if necessary, in December or April, in time for the Numbers that follow in the succeeding month.

The Montreal branch celebrated the Jubilee of its foundation by a Dinner which was held on February 6th.

DIARY OF FELLOWSHIP MEETINGS

Broadstairs	June 1st	Ramble in Rochester.
	,, 16th-20th	ANNUAL DICKENS FESTIVAL.
Melbourne	,, 17th	President's Night.
	July 15th	Readings: *The Chimes*.
	Aug. 19th	Rev. James Waterman.
Portsmouth	June 7th	Portsmouth Cathedral: Service.
Rochester	,, 10th	Visit to Leeds Castle.
	July 4th.	Visit to Brighton.

FRIENDS OF *THE DICKENSIAN*

Blackpool Branch £1 11*s*. 6*d*. Bath Branch £1 1*s*. 0*d*. Montreal Branch 18*s*. 4*d*.

Obituary

We regret to announce the death of Miss L. Thurston and Miss E. Webb of Birmingham, Mr. Edward Wilson of Montreal, Mrs. Rickard and Mrs. Terrell of Plymouth, Miss Isabel Mount of Seattle, and Mrs. Lund of Blackburn.

RECENT DICKENSIANA

" Dickens as a Social Worker." P. A. W. Collins. *Social Work*, October, 1958, and *Social Casework* (N.Y.), February, 1959.

" Links with Dickens in the Isle of Man." W. J. Carlton. *Journal of the Manx Museum*, VI, 1958, No. 75.

" Dickens and the Jews." Harry Stone. *Victorian Studies*, March, 1959.

Essay and Studies, 1959, New Series, Vol. XII. Published for the English Association by John Murray. " Oliver Twist," by Kathleen Tillotson, p. 87-105.

La Vie et des Oeuvres de Dickens, par Sylvère Monod. Pierre Seghers, Paris. 585 frs.

In accordance with the practice almost universally adopted since the passing of the Cheques Act 1957 no receipts will in future be sent in respect of payments made by cheque to the Dickens Fellowship, The Dickens House and *The Dickensian* **except when requested** at the time of payment. Receipts will continue to be sent in respect of payments made in Cash or by Money Order or Postal Order.

WANTED. A set of the *Letters of Charles Dickens*. Nonesuch Edition, 3 vols., 1938. Communications to the Editor.

THE LIFE OF CHARLES DICKENS

by WALTER DEXTER

Profusely illustrated

Price 3s. 6d. **Postage 6d.**

* * * * *

THE HUMOUR OF CHARLES DICKENS

Edited by R. J. CRUIKSHANK

Illustrated by the leading modern cartoonists

Price 3s. 6d. **Postage 9d.**

From THE DICKENS HOUSE, 48 DOUGHTY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

Christmas Cards

A series of 4 double cards 4½ in. × 3½ in. in two colours, with envelopes.
Silhouette of Pickwick or Scrooge
Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim (Phiz.); Fezziwig (Leech)
4s. 6d. per dozen, post free.

Christmas at Dingley Dell (Phiz.)

Sepia. Double card, 5½ in. × 4½ in. with envelopes
5s. per dozen, post free

Two Single cards 5¼ in. × 4¼ in., with Dickens quotations.
With envelopes, **3s. 6d.** per dozen, post free.

Decorative quotation from *Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions*
5½ in. × 8½ in.
5s. per dozen post free

A set of the eight assorted cards, **3s. 6d.** post free.

From THE DICKENS HOUSE, 48 DOUGHTY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1.

Cash to be sent with all orders

Christmas Cards

A series of 4 double cards 4½ in. × 3½ in. in two colours, with envelopes.
Silhouette of Pickwick or Scrooge
Bob Cratchit and Tiny Tim (Phiz.); Fezziwig (Leech)
4s. 6d. per dozen, post free.

Christmas and Dingley Dell (Phiz)
Sepia. Double card, 5½ in. × 4½ in. with envelopes
5s. per dozen, post free

Two Single cards 5¼ in. × 4¼ in., with Dickens quotations.
With envelopes, **3s. 6d.** per dozen, post free.

Decorative quotation from *Doctor Marigold's Prescriptions.*
5½ in. × 8½ in.
5s. per dozen. post free

A set of the eight assorted cards, **3s. 6d.** post free.

From THE DICKENS HOUSE, 48 DOUGHTY STREET,
LONDON, W.C.1.

Cash to be sent with All Orders

THE SHAVIAN

THE SHAVIAN is the journal of THE SHAW SOCIETY, which seeks to promote a wider interest in and deeper understanding of the works of BERNARD SHAW (himself "saturated with DICKENS"). The Society meets regularly in London and New York, publishes *The Shavian* (3 times yearly) as well as occasional *Shavian Tracts*, and is pleased to answer enquiries and welcome new members. The yearly subscription for full membership (which includes *The Shavian* and free admission to most meetings in London) is £1 or $3½. It is half-price to those under 22 giving their date of birth.

Editorial address:

45 STEEPLESTONE CLOSE, LONDON, N18.

THE DICKENS FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE IN HOLLAND

Mr. Godfried Bomans, President of the Haarlem Branch and
Mr. John Greaves, Hon. Secretary, at Volendam